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LIFE OF LAL BEHARI DAY

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LAL BEHARI DAY.

LIFE OF  
LAL BEHARI DAY

*CONVERT, PASTOR, PROFESSOR,  
AND AUTHOR*

BY

G. MACPHERSON, M.A.

*WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY*

THOMAS SMITH, D.D.

FORMERLY MISSIONARY AT CALCUTTA

*AND PORTRAIT*

EDINBURGH

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1900

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## PREFATORY NOTE

THE idea of writing a sketch of the life of the Rev. Lal Behari Day was first suggested to me by Dr. Hastie, Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow. He had introduced me to Mr. Day and his family in India, and he knew what qualifications I might possess for undertaking this task. After suggesting the idea, he brought me into contact with the Rev. Dr. Thomas Smith, who, as is well known, had exercised the deepest influence upon Lal Behari Day when a student under his care at Calcutta, and had not only baptized him, but moulded his Christian character and trained him for the distinguished career and literary achievements of his after-life. Under their encouragement I undertook the task, and this little volume owes much to the warm interest they have taken in its preparation. I have also to acknowledge the great aid derived from the abundant material and correspondence sent to this country by Mrs. Day, whose zeal and devotion to the memory of her husband are beyond all praise.

I have endeavoured to write with the utmost simplicity, impartiality, and faithful adherence to fact. A much larger biography of such a remarkable and interesting life might well have been written ; but it has



been thought advisable to keep it within the narrowest limits. To all who are interested in the great educational and missionary work that has been going on in India since Dr. Duff inaugurated it in 1830, the name of Lal Behari Day has been made familiar not only by well-known missionary publications, but also by his own writings, which are referred to in these pages, and which will always remain his best enduring memorial. Every reader of this sketch of his life will be grateful to Dr. Smith for the interesting Introduction, which he alone could have written, and which adds to it a special value. I am glad that my effort, which it has been a pleasing duty to make, has obtained the approval and sanction of the one man who is best qualified to judge of it.

EDINBURGH,

*6th January 1900.*

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# INTRODUCTION

By Dr. THOMAS SMITH

RIDICULE has been sometimes cast—and not always without reason—upon books of biography which have been described in their titles as treating of the “Life and Times” of their respective subjects. It is felt to be appropriate to speak of the Life and Times of Luther and Knox, of Cromwell and Clarendon, of Pitt, Fox, and Burke, or in our day of Beaconsfield and Gladstone; because these men contributed largely to modify or make the character of the times in which they lived; and one great object of recording the events of their lives and analysing their characters is to show the influence of them upon the thought and action and public history of their respective ages. In this view certainly none but the select few have a right to have times assigned to them as *theirs*. But there is another sense in which the biographies of far humbler men must treat of the times in which they lived, if their lives are to be made intelligible, and that not on the ground of the influence which they exerted on the times, but on the ground of the influence which the times exercised upon *them*. To some extent on the former ground, but very largely on the latter, Mr. Macpherson might have been justified had he adopted the ambitious title for the present volume.

Mr. Day's lot was cast in the most critical period through which India has ever passed. It is safe to say that another equally critical can never be in the future. It was the moment of the waking of that great land from the sleep of centuries; the moment of stirring that long stagnant pool by the angel's rod; the hour of the slackening of the chain preparatory to its destined rupture—by which the giant's limbs had been bound for ages. It was only at such a time, when already the transition had begun, only at such a time when it had as yet advanced but a little way, that Mr. Day's life could have been what it was. At an earlier period he would not have come under the influence which under God made him what he was. At a later, he would have been but one of many, whereas actually he was one of few, who were privileged to put the stamp of their individuality on the India that is to be.

Various causes co-operated in the awaking of the Indian mind, as preparatory to the origination of a new Indian history. It may seem like a beginning of a history of the Trojan War by reference to Leda's two-yolked egg, to specify the abolition of *Sati* as the first of the causes. The way in which the abolition was effected shows clearly that the movement had not preceded it. One would have liked to have seen it effected by the issue of a proclamation, that it is contrary to the will of God, and of the king and parliament and people of England, that women should be burnt; that, therefore, all who should take part in the burning should be dealt with as murderers—any religious sanction of the practice notwithstanding. Instead of this, Lord William Bentinck appointed a Commission to inquire as to the authority on which

the practice rested; and it was professedly on the ground that the Commission reported that there is no recognition of Sati in the Vedas, that the Abolition Act was passed. Had the movement to which I am referring preceded the abolition, it had not been necessary for the Government to adopt such an apologetic attitude towards the rite which they had resolved to suppress, and which I doubt not they would have suppressed, although the finding of the Commission had been the opposite of what it was. But the Sati was a most important element in practical Hinduism; and its suppression even on the comparatively low ground that it was no part of theoretic and authoritative Hinduism gave rise to innumerable questionings and to a general activity of mind which had been previously unknown. It convinced all but the extreme section of orthodox Hindus that Oriental ideas were to be no longer paramount in India, but that a new element, introduced from the West, was henceforth to bear a part in the formation of the national character and the development of the national history.

Nearly contemporaneous with this spirit of inquiry, and a natural result of it, was the desire for English education, and the supply of it which was created by the demand. It is of great importance to bear in mind that while the supply has greatly increased the demand, the demand again, in point of fact, preceded and gave occasion to the supply. The earliest promoters of English education were intelligent natives. In the face of great difficulties they made a creditable beginning. At a later period Government came to their aid. Neither the native pioneers nor the Government seem to have apprehended what was the

legitimate and, unless counteracted, the inevitable effect of such education on the Hindu mind and the Hindu faith. European literature and philosophy and history cannot share with Hinduism a lodgment in the same mind. The one must, of necessity, destroy the other. Had the intelligent natives and the Government apprehended this, it is not to be believed that they would have made religious neutrality a basis of their educational system. It was quite possible to decree that there should be no teaching of Hinduism, and no teaching of Christianity, and no formal controverting of the one or the other. But no ingenuity of man could devise a way whereby truth should be taught and Hinduism should not be assailed or undermined. The neutral system was, of necessity, destructive of Hinduism, while it was solemnly pledged to withhold its hand from construction. The product of such a system must of necessity be individual and national atheism. Neither the natives nor the Government desired this, and if they had realised that this was the tendency of their system, they would have shrunk from it, deeming even Hinduism, with its unspeakable abominations, as preferable to atheism, under which nor men nor nations can ever live. It would seem that the good God has never yet permitted, in any country or in any time, the universal, or even the general, prevalence of atheism, but has ever checked providentially the movements which have threatened such an issue.

The means actually employed for the counteraction of this evil was the susception of English education by the missionary bodies, on no terms of neutrality, but with the avowed intention of employing education as a means for the subversion of Hinduism and the

inculcation of Christianity. The leader of this great movement was Dr. Alexander Duff, the first missionary sent out by the Church of Scotland. This is not the place to endeavour to do justice to the memory of this great man. Nor is it needful, as his career has been fully brought before the public in his biography by Dr. George Smith, and in a much briefer sketch by the present writer. All that we have to do now is to state the fact that in 1830 he founded the General Assembly's Institution in the face of tremendous opposition on the part of the Orientalist party—then not contemptible in numbers or influence—who regarded Sanskrit as the destined regenerator of India; and on the part of the great majority of missionaries, who deemed the teaching of European literature and science and philosophy as improper work for those whose high and exclusive calling was to preach the gospel of Christ. Dr. Duff's early success inside and outside this Institution was very notable. Among the first fruits of his work outside the Institution, though closely connected with it, was the conversion of Gopinath Nandi, who lost his life in the Mutiny in 1857, after thirty-five years of zealous and successful work in the service of his Master; and of Krishna Mohun Bannerjea, who soon after his conversion joined the Church of England, and throughout a long life occupied a most influential position as a man of great learning and of great gifts consecrated to the defence of the gospel. Failure of health compelled Dr. Duff, at the end of 1834, to leave for "home," with little expectation of ever reaching it. The charge of the Institution was left in the able hands of his colleagues Dr. Mackay and Dr. Ewart. Lal Behari entered the Institution in its junior or school department. I



joined the Institution in 1839, and, as the youngest of the missionaries, had the chief charge of the youngest class in the College Department. Of this class Lal Behari was now a member. My special attention soon fell on him as out of sight the best scholar in the class, and still more as exhibiting a manliness of character and fearless truthfulness which were unhappily rare. Although, after twenty years of closest intimacy with natives of Bengal, I am happily not prepared to endorse Lord Macaulay's withering denunciation of the race, yet I must say of the thousands with whom during these years I had intimate intercourse, very few indeed showed aught of that instinctive truthfulness which is distinctive of the Englishman. Of these few Lal Behari was, *longo intervallo*, at the head. At that time he was singularly attractive; with a fair share of that beauty of feature and expression which is characteristic of the *young* Bengali, but which usually passes away very soon, he exhibited characteristics very rare among his compeers, which I can only designate as boyishness. A proper *boy*, with his recklessness and affectionateness, is to me, and I suppose to most others, the model of humanity at its best, and I never found among Bengalis these qualities so happily blended as they were in him. To my colleagues, though at this time they had less to do with him than I had, he was equally an object of interest and affection, and so afterwards to Dr. Duff, who returned to Calcutta in 1840, and to whom I soon made my young friend known.

As to the steps by which his mind and heart came under the influence of the gospel of Christ, I regret that at this distance of time I can add nothing to

the too scanty details which Mr. Macpherson has been able to give. I only mention that when I was obliged, at the beginning of 1842, to go for the sake of the voyage to the Cape of Good Hope, which in those days was the usual resort of Indian invalids, I left with the conviction that he would ere long make profession of that faith which I was confident that he cherished. When I was met by my beloved colleagues on my return to Calcutta, one of the first questions I asked was as to Lal Behari. I suppose none but a missionary can fully estimate the joy with which I received the intelligence that he had for some time been an applicant for baptism, but that it had been deferred in anticipation of my return, that I might have the satisfaction of administering the sacred ordinance. It was administered accordingly on the following Sabbath. Although the baptism of Lal Behari attracted far less attention than did that of many who were of higher caste and higher social position, yet I am persuaded that no more momentous hour was ever struck on the time-piece of Indian history than that which noted Lal Behari's entrance into the Christian Church.

By the arrangements of the mission the care of the converts devolved mainly on the senior missionary, Dr. Duff, and afterwards, during his long absence at home,—beginning I think with 1847,—on Dr. Mackay. I had therefore little to do with him henceforth, excepting as a theological student in the Free Church Institution, and as a friend. But I know that a singularly strong mutual affection subsisted between him and all the missionaries. We rejoiced over him, as he gradually took the place, in departments other than those in which Dr. K. M. Bannerjea

deservedly held the pre-eminence, of leader of the native Christian community.

I knew several natives, Christian and non-Christian, who exceeded our friend in some mental powers. There was, for example, that Mahendra Lal Basak, to whom loving and admiring reference is made by our friend in this volume, who possessed great mathematical ability, and gave promise of mathematical attainments, in days when an Indian senior-wrangler-ship, attained in this year of 1899, was not only far beyond the range of "practical politics," but had not yet obtained a footing in dreamland. But for all-roundness in the development and balance of faculties, I have known no Native that came within sight of Lal Behari, and not many Europeans who excelled him. Yet I ought to say that it was the power of acquisition, assimilation, and adaptation that distinguished him, rather than that of origination. This made him a singularly attractive companion, enabling him to take a leading part in oral discussion, and ensuring his success as a preacher, a lecturer, and a writer. I may here introduce a very small incident, which must, however, have made a strong impression on me at the time, else I should not have remembered it so vividly after so many years. I had as a guest one who has since attained, and has long maintained, a very high, perhaps the highest, position among the journalists and literateurs of London. One evening two native Christians came in, and were asked to remain to tea. After they left, my friend said to me, "I have often thought you might find fitter employment for yourself. But it is worth spending any man's life to make men like these out of Bengal." One of the two was Lal Behari.

As I left India finally in 1858, my direct intercourse with my friend ceased from that date, but till a much later period I was well conversant with his doings. On one or two points touched upon by Mr. Macpherson, I feel that I ought to make a few remarks. They shall be very brief. The first is as to the somewhat unhappy disagreement with Dr. Duff, with reference to the relative position of Native and European missionaries. I venture to think that Mr. Macpherson has not quite apprehended the matter at issue, and indeed it was scarcely possible that an outsider should have quite accurately apprehended it. There was no question of Presbyterian parity really involved. In all Church courts the claim of the Native missionaries to absolute parity with their European brethren was not only frankly allowed, but was rejoiced in. But there was a body outside of these courts altogether, and whose members were not necessarily even Presbyterians. A main function of this body was the control of funds contributed entirely in this country. The European missionaries were *ex officio* members, and they did not consider themselves entitled to allow the claim of the Native brethren to the same official membership. It was perfectly natural that Lal Behari, from his point of view, should have regarded the exclusion as an infringement of Presbyterian parity, and it was perfectly natural for his biographer to adopt his view and share a biographer's estimate of the courage and determination with which our friend maintained the position which he had occupied. It needed courage to oppose one to whom he owed so much as he did to Dr. Duff, whom he esteemed so highly and loved so cordially. Indeed, for that matter, it required courage

in anyone to oppose Dr. Duff. But *causa facit martyrem*.

Lal Behari's abandonment of the mission and entrance into the educational service of the Government caused great sorrow to his early friends. At the time of its occurrence Dr. Duff and I were both resident in Edinburgh. In some way—whether by letter from himself or otherwise I do not remember—Dr. Duff heard of his intention. He came to me and urged me to write a letter of remonstrance. Holding the view which I have already expressed in this note regarding the character of the neutrality system, it is probable that I wrote too strongly. If my memory serves me right, my letter reached Calcutta after the step had been decisively taken; but I do not suppose that the result would have been different had it been received earlier. It is satisfactory to know that while the professor rigidly observed the neutrality rule within the classroom, he persistently went so far as the rules of the service permitted—a great deal farther indeed than a literal interpretation allowed—in acting as the zealous Christian advocate; and that in all relations of family and social life his bearing was in strict accordance with Christian profession.

Of the fact of Lal Behari's ultimate return to the Established Church of Scotland, which he had quitted in 1843, I first became aware in the perusal in MS. of the present volume. It caused me much surprise and some regret. Of course Mr. Macpherson is quite right in assuming that Lal Behari became a Free Churchman originally mainly because his friends and fathers in the faith were such. He was at that time a zealous Free Churchman; but I am quite prepared

to admit that the zeal of a Christian of less than two years' standing could not be a very intelligent one. But I can confidently testify that throughout the succeeding years he became constantly firm in his attachment to the Free Church. How, then, is his abandonment of it to be accounted for? I suppose somewhat thus. On his return to reside in Calcutta, when he retired from the professorship, he found the *personnel* of the mission entirely changed. The actual missionaries "knew not Joseph." There was no remnant of the tie which had bound him so closely to their predecessors. And then, while his action in leaving the mission at first might be differently viewed, while there might be and probably were some in the Free Church who would have regarded it with far less disapproval than Dr. Duff and I did, and while in the Established Church there might be some who would have gone the whole length with us in our reprobation of it, yet it was with the Free Church that he had controverted the matter. With the Established Church he had had no controversy. This is sufficient to account to me, with my knowledge of my friend's temperament, for his acting as he did.

It only remains that I very cordially commend Mr. Macpherson's volume to the reader's serious attention. It will bring him into close contact with a man whom circumstances combined with high endowments and with divine grace to make a leader of men. Had he been destined to live in the days when the Christians of India shall be numbered by millions, he would still have been a very notable man. Living as he actually did when they were counted only by thousands—and of these not many—he was simply unique. I may be allowed to say

in a single word that, in my judgment, Mr. Macpherson has succeeded remarkably well in the execution of a not very easy task, and has produced a volume full of instruction and fraught with human interest.

I may here state, in a few words, the manner in which this task was undertaken by him. I had expressed some years ago, in the course of an article published in a missionary periodical, the hope that a biography of Lal Behari might be produced. About the same time his widow wrote to the Rev. Dr. Hastie, asking him to become the biographer. However much he was disposed to undertake it, the immense work necessitated by his appointment to the Professorship of Theology in the University of Glasgow made its accomplishment impossible for him. He therefore applied to me. It would have been to me also a work and labour of love. But my hands too were full, and I was obliged to decline the task and honour, for such I should have esteemed it. Dr. Hastie therefore applied to Mr. Macpherson, now in Edinburgh, who kindly undertook the work. I read the MS. when completed, and, at Dr. Hastie's request, agreed to furnish a short Introduction.

And now my earnest prayer is that this little book may be the means, in the hand of God, of exciting or increasing in the minds of many an interest in the millions of India, and the spread among them of that gospel which is destined to elevate them to a high stage of human life, and to prepare multitudes of them in the present and succeeding generations for eternal blessedness and glory.

T. S. .

# LIFE OF LAL BEHARI DAY

## CHAPTER I

### BIRTH AND EDUCATION

AWAY to the north of Calcutta, some sixty or seventy miles distant, there stands in the flat fertile district of Burdwan the quiet, pleasant rural village of Talpur. On its outskirts lie spacious tanks or ponds of clear cool water, surrounded by high banks, on which flourish luxuriantly shady groves of the stately palmyra-palm, lending a graceful beauty to the spot. From these the village is supposed in fact to have derived its name, Talpur (Palmtown). Here, in the year 1824, Lal Behari Day was born, and in this sequestered nook he spent the careless days of infancy and early boyhood, mostly under the charge of his mother and her relatives, for, during eleven months of the year, attention to business required his father to be absent in Calcutta. In after days Mr. Day loved to recall the happy hours of innocent childhood passed in his pretty native village, and to let his memory linger on its inhabitants with their simple unaffected ways, for he had none of that vanity which might have led him either to forget or ignore his



straitened circumstances at the outset of his life. To say that he was of humble origin would not be strictly correct, for it should be remembered that social position among the Hindus is regulated by a different standard from that which prevails in England, where wealth or a long pedigree usually fixes the grade which the individual occupies in the social scale. In India, caste, as is well known, takes the place of the family genealogical tree, and determines each man's several status. Lal Behari Day's father / belonged to the Banker Caste, which, though it did not occupy a high position in the social system of the Hindus, and ranked far below the level of the Brahmins, was nevertheless looked upon as a highly influential class. In his *Recollections of my School Days*, Mr. Day gave a fairly full account of his paternal parent, but made no attempt to trace his ancestry farther back.

Concerning his mother he has recorded but little. She does not appear to have exercised more than a slight influence either in forming his character or shaping the future course of his life. Her knowledge of the great world of humanity hardly extended beyond the circle of the horizon of her native village. She was perhaps too young to be a mother, as he has himself hinted, for she was only sixteen years old at the time of his birth, though she was twenty-five before he left the parental roof. From his silence regarding her, it may be presumed that she was not in any way a remarkable woman, though it is just possible that Oriental dislike to lift the veil from the feminine side of family life may partly account for his reticence. She was indeed passionately fond of him, but her affection, if it had had its way, would

have proved more of a hindrance than a help to him in the path he was to pursue. His father was much older than she, being in fact well over forty when Lal Behari began his earthly pilgrimage. He was not a man endowed with great strength of will or force of character in any form, but he possessed a distinct individuality, and many of the incidents in his life engraved themselves indelibly on his son's memory. The pursuit of his calling, which compelled him to frequent the busy haunts of men, had taught him that education was not without its advantages, and, what proved to be of special importance to young Day, he had come to realise that if the lad were to make headway in the world and better his position, he must have some knowledge of the English language. As the village of Talpur afforded no means of obtaining this knowledge, he resolved to remove his son to Calcutta, where there existed better opportunities of attaining the object he had in view. For only a little more than four years was he spared to watch over his son and guide his footsteps in the great city, yet, as it was under his fostering care during that period that Lal Behari first began to imbibe that love of learning for which he afterwards became distinguished, a brief notice of his paternal parent deserves to be inserted here.

The following particulars are gleaned from the animated description of him penned by Mr. Day long after his father's death. How he employed his early years is not related, but latterly, in Calcutta, he took up the business of a bill and stockbroker, which he carried on in a small way. In his day the reputation of brokers for tender consciences was not exactly proverbial, but he, being "an orthodox Hindu of the

old Puritanic stamp," maintained a strict honesty in his dealings, a line of conduct which was not rewarded with the success it merited. He could neither read nor write English, though familiar with a few technical terms, such as "shares," "company's paper," "premium," "discount," which he had picked up in the course of business. Prior to his settling at Talpur he had, while living in his native town of Dacca, married a wife, by whom he had two sons. His wife and sons died early, within a short time of each other, and the grief-stricken husband and father sought to forget his misfortunes and sorrows by migrating to Western Bengal. This mournful event, casting a shadow over his life, had contributed to deepen his religious convictions, and made him more diligent in the observance of what he believed to be his religious duties. Vegetable food formed his sole diet. Meat, of course, was not to be thought of, but even fish he never tasted, and he drank nothing except milk or water. He bathed early every morning, spending thereafter an hour in his devotions, which were further prolonged by the telling of his beads. Before eating or drinking, the same ceremony was punctiliously gone through. At all hours of the day, pious ejaculations would fall from his lips, while he would occasionally spend hours at night in telling his beads. While at Talpur he again entered the bonds of wedlock. His second wife bore him two sons, of whom the subject of this memoir was the elder.

Until he was nine years old, Lal Behari's life was very much the same as that which falls to the lot of thousands of children annually ushered into existence in Bengal. He playfully conjectures that, like other

Hindu children, he had his little body, at a very early stage, well rubbed with oil, as a preliminary to his being laid on a plank to bask in the blazing sun, for the purpose of inuring him to bear with impunity the rays of that luminary. Nor did he think it likely that his childish movements were hampered by any superfluous clothing until he was considered to be old enough to be sent to school. As was customary among Hindus, he had his nativity cast, and was pronounced to be a "lucky" child, or one on whom fortune was to smile. Three reasons were assigned for this favourable forecast, which may be given as curious examples of the beliefs then prevalent among the Bengal villagers: first, the village astrologer<sup>•</sup> pronounced the hour of his birth auspicious, because the moon was full; secondly, on the very day of his birth, his father received the largest sum of money he had ever been paid in the way of business; and thirdly, he had his mother's face, which was a sure sign of prosperity.

With the completion of his fifth year, Lal Behari reached the commencement of what Shakespeare has fixed as the second stage of life. A boy's first day at school is usually a great event, but it soon gets effaced from his memory, unless accessory circumstances happen to keep it alive. His introduction to school life left a lasting impression on the mind of the little Hindu boy of Talpur, which is not to be wondered at, considering the elaborate preparations connected with it. His boyish pride in his new clothes, the first he had ever worn, was overawed by the impressive religious ceremonies in which he played a prominent part. Through life he retained a vivid recollection of the scene. Forty years after his ad-

mission as a pupil into that "humble temple of learning," the Bengal village school, he wrote a description of the preliminary solemnities, which his father, who set great store on learning, thought necessary to be performed in order to insure a blessing on his education. The scene is not without interest, and cannot be better depicted than in his own words.

"As my father," he wrote, "looked upon the education of a child as a most momentous affair, he resolved that I should not begin to learn the Bengali alphabet without the celebration of a religious ceremony, and a solemn invocation especially of the goddess of wisdom, without whose blessing he believed no man can acquire knowledge. The astrologers were consulted, and an auspicious day fixed upon. On that day a solemn service was held, at which the family priest officiated. At this distance of time I do not remember the details of the ceremony; but this much I recollect, that I put on new clothes, that I had to repeat some words, that I had to bow down several times with my head to the ground, that the family priest received gifts in money and clothes, that presents were sent to the schoolmaster of the village who was to initiate me into the mysteries of reading and writing, and that a piece of ochre (the equivalent for chalk in the villages of Bengal) was put into my hand. I was thus solemnly and religiously commended to the especial favour of the goddess of learning and wisdom.

"In this age of rampant unbelief, all this may be deemed a silly superstition. But silly it certainly is not; and if it is somewhat superstitious, it is only an excess of an essentially good feeling. It cannot be

denied that the most important epoch in the history of a child is the period when he is sent to school; and it is doubtless attended with the most beneficial effects both on the child and on his parents, if that period is entered upon with a sense of the importance of the occasion, and with an invocation of the divine blessing.

“The following morning I accompanied my father to the village school, and was introduced to the schoolmaster, to whom I made a profound bow—my head touching the ground in the act. The schoolmaster, with the ochre which I had in my possession, traced the first letters of the Bengali alphabet on the ground; and I was told to run the ochre over every one of those letters.”

Such is Mr. Day's account of his advent into school life, and it can hardly be doubted that his vindication of his father's action will commend itself to all seriously reflecting minds. Though the Hindu parent failed to rise above his creed, his spirit of reverence shown towards knowledge, stamped itself on the boy's imagination, producing fruitful results in later years. It would almost seem that the poet's lines—

“Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
But more of reverence in us dwell,”

found an echo in the breast of this simple dweller on the banks of the Ganges, when meditating on his children's education.

During the four years he attended the village school, Lal Behari did not reveal any striking aptitude for learning, which need not excite surprise, inasmuch as the mechanical mode of teaching was scarcely of a kind calculated to bring out the parts of an intelligent

boy. His schoolmaster prided himself upon having the blood of three generations of pedagogues flowing in his veins, and seems to have inherited "a rare felicity in communicating to his pupils what little he knew." To this he had in addition the more ordinary qualifications of neat hand-writing and expertness in mental arithmetic, and in these branches of learning, for which the school had a local reputation, Lal Behari acquired some skill under his tuition, though he confesses his progress in arithmetic was not very rapid. In his amusing sketch of this village school and its presiding genius, he states that the subjects professed to be taught were writing, arithmetic, and reading. The pupils were arranged in classes according to their proficiency, not in the art of reading, but in the art of writing. Each class was marked out by its own separate kind of writing materials, from which it got its name. The boys of the lowest class were called the "floor-boys," because they traced the letters of the alphabet with a piece of ochre on the floor; the class above this wrote on palm-leaves with pens of reed; the next higher class made use of the plantain-leaf; paper was reserved for the highest class only. When he left the village school, Lal Behari had been promoted to the "paper" class. In reading, he could not have made much progress, seeing how imperfectly it must have been taught. Only one reading-book was in use in the whole school, and, with the exception of some arithmetical rules, its sole contents consisted of two short mythical tales. No attempt was made at teaching grammar. With but moderate respect for the abilities of his old schoolmaster, Mr. Day retained kindly recollections of him, nor did he consider him an unlovable man, though a severe dis-

ciplinarian in his way. If his scholarly attainments were not great, they were on a level with his salary of two rupees a month paid in cash, eked out with presents of rice, pulse, mustard-oil, and other articles of food given him by his pupils. Although the worthy pedagogue failed to detect any seeds of promise in his young pupil, yet they must have been there and visible to a shrewder eye, for the boy must have been an observant little fellow, endowed with a retentive memory. Few men, after passing the meridian of life, could vividly recall or fully describe so many incidents in their school life before they were nine years of age, as Mr. Day was able to do.

His father having written from Calcutta strongly expressing his wish that his son should be sent to him, his mother, sorely against her will, acceded at length to this request. Lal Behari was accordingly removed from the village school, and preparations were made for his departure. The priest and the astrologer of the family were consulted, and the auspicious day for starting on his journey was fixed. The astrologer sought to console his mother by telling her that her son was to become a rich and a learned man. • But to this she replied, "I do not want my son to be either learned or rich. Give me your benedictions that he may be spared to me." As the day of parting with him approached, she could do nothing but sigh and weep. His father desired to provide him with a better education in the hope that it would enable him to earn a competence in life and place him on a surer footing for competing with others; his mother cared nothing for these things, provided only he was spared to her. It is not difficult to imagine how great the shock must have been, when, some



years later, she received the news of his having changed his religion, which, to her mind, probably meant practically losing him altogether. But to return to our narrative. On the morning of the day appointed for his departure, his mother roused him two hours before daybreak. The family priest soon after arrived, repeated certain prayers, invoked a blessing on his head, and before the stars had ceased to twinkle in the sky, he had left behind him his peaceful native village, where a vehicle on wheels was never seen. Two-thirds of the journey had to be done on foot; the remaining third was by water. After four days' travelling, the party in whose company he was, landed at that bustling noisy mart of trade, Calcutta. The capital of India has, in a sanitary respect at least, much improved on the state of matters that existed sixty years ago. Then, as now, it was a city of fair palaces; but it was also a city of exceedingly foul smells. Even among the surrounding rural population it had an evil reputation for unhealthiness and mosquitoes, owing to its inhabitants utterly disregarding all sanitary laws, which at that time were but imperfectly understood. To the accumulated filth and stench in the streets was added the evil of overcrowding in the houses. The large building in the heart of the city in which Lal Behari's father had taken rooms, had over five hundred traders from all parts of India lodged within its walls. With such overcrowding and the neglect of sanitation in a hot, humid climate, it was little wonder that the country lad, before he had stayed there a month, fell sick, suffering from a violent attack of diarrhoea, and then being prostrated by severe fever. After a time he recovered from these attacks, and having paid the

toll exacted by the insalubrity of his new surroundings, he was now free to begin his education in earnest.

His father's object in bringing him to Calcutta at so early an age was, as has already been stated, to send him to some school where he would receive instruction in the English tongue, thus opening for him the surest road to bettering his position in life. Natives of India had begun to be more largely employed by the Government, and he was fully aware that the chances of success in that direction lay in favour of those conversant with the language of the ruling power, while his own experience had likewise shown him its advantages to those engaged in business. To what extent it might also open the door to new realms of knowledge, which might undermine and destroy in the expanding mind of a young lad all faith in the religion of his forefathers, he did not, at first, stop to inquire, for "in his opinion, real knowledge was not to be found within the range of English literature, it being confined to Sanskrit, which is the language of the gods." Later on, when it became known to his friends that he proposed sending his son to a missionary school, they urged upon him the risk that the latter ran of being drawn away from his old religion and being converted to Christianity. But in this matter his fatalistic ideas made him turn a deaf ear to all their remonstrances, and they failed to shake him from his resolution. The native community was at that time much excited over the first conversions to Christianity, brought about by Dr. Duff, and we give his answers to his friends' arguments as revealing the attitude of mind of the pious old Hindu. We shall quote Mr. Day's own words:—

“‘Is it right—is it expedient,’ argued some of my father’s friends, ‘to imperil the religion of your son by putting him for education into the hands of so zealous a missionary, of a man whose avowed object it is to *eat* the religion of young Hindus, of a man who has already succeeded in *eating* the religion of several young men?’” My father brought, I remember,—for the subject was discussed again and again in my hearing after I had arrived at Calcutta,—two arguments to meet the above objection. In the first place, he said he had observed that though Dr. Duff was a very zealous missionary, he never baptized young boys who were unacquainted with the Christian religion, but baptized those only who had studied English for at least seven or eight years; that he did not intend to make of me a learned man, but to give me so much knowledge of English as would enable me to obtain a decent situation; and that long before I was able to understand lectures on the Christian religion, he would withdraw me from the Institution and put me into an office. And in the second place,—and this was in my father’s opinion the stronger of the two arguments, as, like all Hindus, he was a staunch fatalist,—my father replied that what was written on one’s forehead must be fulfilled, all precautions notwithstanding. He expatiated on the stern and unalterable decrees of fate, and concluded a somewhat metaphysical speech with the following peroration:—“‘If it is written on Kala Gopal’s’ (Lal Behari Day’s Hindu name) ‘forehead that he will *not* become a Christian, then he will not become a Christian, let Duff Sahib do what he can; but if it is written on Kala Gopal’s forehead that he *will* become a Christian, then he will become

a Christian, do what I can.' This was a perfect settler; and my father accordingly resolved to put me into the General Assembly's Institution."

The Duff Saheb referred to was the well-known missionary, Dr. Duff. In 1830, some three years before the foregoing discussion took place, he had opened in Calcutta his school, soon after widely known as the General Assembly's Institution. Of course, no boy could at this time have been taught there for seven years. Mr. Day's father meant that Dr. Duff had baptized only those who were familiar enough with the English language to understand his lectures. They had been taught that language elsewhere. The line of teaching adopted by Dr. Duff fell little short of a revolution on the then existing methods of education and mission work; hence the attention it attracted among the native community. Dissatisfied, on the one hand, with the meagre results attained by the older missionaries, who had confined themselves exclusively to preaching and teaching the doctrines of Christianity, and unfavourably impressed, on the other hand, with the questionable effects produced by the irreligious or purely secular instruction given in the schools first established for providing natives with an English education, he originated and carried into practice a scheme of his own, in which secular was closely linked with religious teaching. In the "Hindu College," which had been started thirteen years before as the first English school for natives of Bengal, all reference to religion was strictly forbidden from a fear of offending native susceptibilities or prejudices, which might drive or keep away pupils from attending it. Dr. Duff from the first let it be clearly understood that in the General

Assembly's Institution all secular instruction must go hand in hand with the teaching of the tenets of Christianity, that the goal it was striving to reach was the spread of the Christian religion, and in it secular education was but a means to that end. Notwithstanding his clear intimation to this effect, the school quickly became popular, and crowds of native lads flocked to it, and among them was Lal Behari Day. Had his father been a richer man, he would have sent him elsewhere for his education, but, being poor, he was under the necessity of placing him where he would be taught without his having to pay fees. For this reason he had decided to send his son to the General Assembly's Institution, where, as he had been told, the best education that could be obtained in India was given gratuitously. There was certainly one other school where free education was to be had, but as he did not think it likely that he could get him admitted there, he made no attempt to see if that were possible.

Entered as a pupil, Lal Behari soon found himself in a congenial atmosphere in that Institution, and before long he became noted among his classmates for his powers of memory. He has preserved an anecdote of his first year there, which shows the eager interest he and his schoolmates took in their lessons, as well as his own capacity for remembering what he had read. The master of the class, in order to help the growth of and strengthen the retentive faculty of the minds of his boys, encouraged them to commit to memory passages from the reading-book used in the class. Not content with this, the boys, unknown to the missionary superintendent, who might not quite have approved of their proceedings, instituted

among themselves mnemonic competitions. One boy would challenge another to compete with him in repeating from memory a few pages of their reading-book. Their classmates acted as judges, and whichever of the two made the fewest mistakes was declared the winner, who received from the loser a few pice, or farthings. It was a point of honour for the victor to invest the money in sweetmeats and stand treat to the class. In these contests Lal Behari rarely failed to come off victorious, and the distribution of the sweetmeats made him popular among his fellows, though he himself would have been better without them, for they almost invariably caused him to be ill.

In his second year he was dux of his class, and was duly promoted to the next higher one. But he had now begun to have confidence in himself, and he was not satisfied with this promotion. Though younger than any of his classfellows, he was, at his own request, transferred to one still higher. He was perhaps a little too ambitious on this occasion, for during the twelve years of his academic life, this was the only year when he did not stand dux of his class. This failure he attributed, however, not to his double promotion, but to persecution arising from jealousy on the part of some of the older boys in the class, of whose morals he has given a sad account, representing them as a vicious set of lads, indulging in all sorts of reprehensible immoralities. They even tried hard to lead him astray into their own evil courses; this temptation he was happily able to resist, for his father had brought him up in the strictest principles of morality.

But his disappointment at not gaining the first

place in his class was but a trifling matter to him, compared with the death of his excellent father, whom he had the misfortune to lose at the close of this year (1837). In after years he recorded, in grateful terms, how much he was indebted to him for his wise guidance and the example of an upright life which he had set him. "As I was the son of his old age," he wrote, "he loved me excessively, though he was too wise to spoil me with fond affection. He was not only anxious that I should receive a good education, but also that I should imbibe right moral principles, and he never missed an opportunity to instil into my mind the principles of virtue. As I was not fond of play I was always beside my father, excepting when I was at school, and both morning and evening I had the inestimable privilege of listening to his advice in all matters relating to the conduct of life. He could not assist me in my English studies, for he did not know that language; but he did me infinitely more good by forming my character, by restraining me from the paths of vice, and leading me into those of virtue. I do not remember that he ever applied the rod to me, as I was invariably obedient to him—indeed, I do not recollect that he ever spoke angrily to me. Of such a wise and loving father I was now deprived." On a cold December night he mournfully followed his father's bier to the Hindu place of cremation on the banks of the Hooghly, and there discharged the last office of Hindu filial affection by applying a lighted torch to the mouth of his father's corpse as it lay on the funeral pile. Three weeks after, he received at the annual distribution of prizes the last volume of Scott and Henry's *Commentary on the Bible*, which

he took home to his native village, where he read it over and over again during the vacation.

With his father's death his real struggles began. How to continue his studies, and at the same time keep body and soul together, was the problem he had now to solve, for small though his father's means had been, he had been able to afford him bed and board. Had it not been for the timely generosity of a cousin, who kindly gave him food and shelter in his house in Thieves' Gardens (so the street was named), he would have been compelled to leave school forthwith. In this cousin's house he resided for six years. The place was not at all fitted for a lad of studious habits, since the domestic arrangements of the family, together with the small size of the house, deprived him of any opportunity of quiet. It was Hobson's choice with him, however, and he had no alternative but to make the best of circumstances. Indeed, but for the kind offices of a poor cripple old woman who acted as cook to the family, it would have been hardly possible for him to have got on at all. But for her he would rarely have received any breakfast until he returned from school in the afternoon. At great sacrifice to her own comfort she rose at a much earlier hour than she otherwise need have done, in order to provide him with a morning meal and prevent him having to fast all day. But for her assistance, too, it would have been next to impossible for him to prepare his lessons. The noisy conversation carried on in the only sitting-room available, debarred him from study in the evening. The only course left for him was to go to bed early and be regularly roused by her at two o'clock in the morning. At this early hour he could



not see to read without artificial light, and he had no money with which to buy oil. By saving a little out of her daily allowance of mustard-oil for culinary purposes, she also enabled him to overcome this difficulty. From his mother he could receive no assistance, for she was so poor that he did not know how she managed to live, and she probably had to eke out her scanty means of existence by disposing of her few articles of jewellery. As for books, he had never been able to buy any, even during his father's lifetime, except some of the cheapest that were absolutely necessary; dearer books, some of which seemed indispensable to successful study, he had not been able to purchase. In this last respect he was not much worse off than he had been before. The real loss that he sustained by his father's death lay in the fact that he had now no one to encourage him to persevere, no one to sympathise with him, no one to lend him external moral support,—a most serious loss certainly to a lad of thirteen struggling with adverse fortune. Further progress in his education henceforth depended entirely upon his own strength of will and resolution. His cousin was far from being a hard-hearted man, and was not without a touch of gratitude in his nature. In past years he had been indebted to his uncle for some assistance, and, in providing his uncle's son with the necessaries of life, he was only repaying the kindness formerly shown to himself. But when he had furnished him with food, clothing, and a roof to cover his head, he considered he had done his duty. As he lived quite up to his income, his resources did not admit of his giving him pecuniary aid, even if he had been willing to do so. The education that his

young cousin was pursuing was beyond the range of his ideas; he took no interest in it, and it was a matter of indifference to him how he passed his examinations. Though he was a man over thirty, he seems to have had a feeling that the lad of thirteen was morally his superior. He was addicted to opium-smoking, but was ashamed to indulge in this vice when his younger relative was likely to notice him, and whenever the latter had occasion to speak to him, he always carefully tried to hide away his pipe. But whatever were his failings, Lal Behari felt grateful to him for his assistance at a time when he had nowhere else to turn for help. Still, to be dependent on the charity of one who was not legally bound to provide for him was not a pleasant situation. Pressed for want of money to buy books, and without encouragement from any quarter, he must have been greatly tempted to give up the pursuit of knowledge. He had, however, the courage to be true to himself and go forward. His success during the short period he had been in the General Assembly's Institution likely weighed with him, and stimulated him to further effort. Had his missionary teachers known all his circumstances they would have tried to smooth the path of the bright clever lad, who must have attracted their attention. This did happen later, but at the time of his father's death the tie that bound him to this Institution was so slender that we find him, shortly after this event, endeavouring to gain admission into another school.

Thrown on his own resources, he determined that nothing should be omitted on his part which might help to secure for himself the best education procurable. As regards instruction in English, the "Hindu

College" stood higher in the estimation of many of his countrymen than any other educational institution in Calcutta. Sharing at that time in this opinion, he imagined that if he could gain admission to its classrooms it would be greatly to his advantage. There was but one way by which he could hope to find an entrance, for the comparatively high fees charged there closed every other door against him. His only chance lay in his first being admitted into Hare's School, which had the privilege of sending a certain number of its distinguished pupils to the Hindu College to be educated at the expense of the School Society. With this object in view he waited upon Mr. Hare. After several fruitless attempts to obtain an interview, he at length had the satisfaction of being ushered into his presence. His application was not entertained, and the grounds for refusing it certainly strike an ordinary unbiassed mind as being very insufficient. Recalling to mind at a later period the circumstances of this interview, Mr. Day gave an account of his reception, relating, as nearly as he could remember it the conversation that ensued between Mr. Hare and himself. This curious dialogue between a well-known English philanthropist and a Hindu lad sheds a strong light on the strained state of feeling then existing in connection with the question of teaching religion in the schools attended by native youths. The following is his description of the scene and the conversation as narrated by him:—"I was shown into a room upstairs, where I found Mr. Hare sitting at a small table. His face was towards the south; a Bengali somewhat older than I stood before him, his hat stood in the middle of the table, and at his right hand was a blackboard. As I approached

him, he called me to his side, took my hand, patted me on the cheek, put his left arm round my neck, and asked me what I wanted. At this distance of time I could not recall all the details of the conversation I had with him, but to the best of my recollection the following was the sum and substance:—

“*Lal Behari Day.*—‘I wish, sir, to be admitted into your school.’

“*Mr. Hare.*—‘What school do you attend?’

“*L. B. D.*—‘I am reading now in the General Assembly’s Institution.’

“*Mr. H.*—‘What books do you read?’

“*L. B. D.*—‘I read Marshman’s *Brief Survey of History*, Lennie’s *Grammar*, *Geography*, *Euclid* (Book Second), *New Testament*, and *Bengali*.’

“*Mr. H.*—‘Do you know the 7th Proposition of the First Book of Euclid? Let me see you demonstrate it. Go to the board.’”

The lad went to the blackboard accordingly, enunciated the proposition, and proceeded with its demonstration, which he completed to Mr. Hare’s entire satisfaction. Then Mr. Hare resumed the conversation.

“*Mr. H.*—‘You seem to be well taught; why do you wish to leave the General Assembly’s Institution?’

“*L. B. D.*—‘People say there is better teaching in your school; besides, I have a great desire to go to the Hindu College from your school.’

“*Mr. H.*—‘There must be very good teaching in the General Assembly’s Institution; Dr. Duff has sent out a new missionary, Mr. Campbell.’

“*L. B. D.*—‘There is no one of the name of Campbell in the General Assembly’s Institution; but perhaps you mean Mr. Macdonald?’

"Mr. H.—'Yes, yes, Mr. Macdonald; they all say he is a clever man. You had better remain where you are.'

"L. B. D.—'No, sir; kindly admit me into your school.'

"Mr. H.—'You read the New Testament; you are half a Christian. You will spoil my boys.'

"L. B. D.—'I read the New Testament because it is a class-book, but I don't believe in it. I am no more a Christian than this boy here.'

"Mr. H.—'All Mr. Duff's pupils are half-Christians. I won't take any of them into my school. I won't take you; you are half-Christian; you will spoil my boys.'

"I begged hard," Mr. Day continues. "I earnestly besought him to take me into his school; but he kept repeating the words, 'You are half a Christian; you will spoil my boys.' Such is my recollection of David Hare, who, though benevolently disposed towards the people of Bengal, was a man of no religious principles. Let not the reader think that I am doing injustice to David Hare. I have done him full justice in a foregoing chapter" (in his *Recollections of My School Days*), "and I here repeat that he took the liveliest interest in the education of my countrymen, which he promoted by personal exertions as well as by his purse; but I cannot conceal the fact that he was a man of no religion. As for myself, I thank God that Mr. Hare did not take me into his school, for if he had taken me I should, in all human probability, have been different from what I now am." Thus by the timidity of a kind but somewhat narrow-minded man, was Lal Behari baffled in his first and last attempt to pass the portals of the Hindu College. Providence

had reserved for him quite another destiny, the first glimmering of which had not as yet dawned on his mind.

If Mr. Hare's rebuff in any way discouraged him in his quest after knowledge, it could only have been temporarily; perhaps it did him good. At all events he settled down to hard work in the General Assembly's Institution, being now clearly convinced that no other avenue to learning was open to him. Rapidly he pushed himself to the front of his class, and having once taken the lead, he never again lost it. At the close of every session he stood dux of his class, while for the last three years of his academic career, he had at the end of each the honour of winning the most coveted prize, the gold medal, which was assigned to him as dux of the whole Institution. On this well-earned distinction he looked back with pardonable pride. The high position attained among his class-fellows was all the more creditable to him, if due allowance is made for the disadvantages he laboured under. Chief of these was his lack of money to buy books. It has been truly said that there is no royal road to learning; without books it is assuredly a rugged one. Books were dearer in those days than they are now, and, to make up for the want of them, he had to devise various shifts and ingenious expedients. An English-Bengali dictionary he could not afford to buy. He did in time become the proud possessor of a mutilated second-hand copy of a pocket edition of Johnson's *Dictionary*, which he picked up for a few pence. It was sold cheap, because nearly the whole of the letter A was missing. Arithmetic and Algebra he learned by practice in the classroom, never having had a text-book on either subject which

he could call his own. Euclid's *Geometry* was kindly lent him by one of the masters. The higher mathematical treatises in use were luxuries too expensive for his purse; these he borrowed, and wrote out entire copies of them. Nevertheless he almost succeeded in gaining the highest mathematical prize awarded by the Institution; the examinations resulted in a tie between him and another competitor, and the prize was divided equally between the two. But not in mathematics only did he excel; in every other branch of knowledge he kept quite as conspicuously ahead of his classfellows, thereby winning golden opinions from his teachers for his vigorous understanding and unflagging industry. While on this subject, we ought not to pass over in silence his economical method of improving his acquaintance with the best works of English authors. The plan which he hit upon for adding to his store of English literature, whatever may be its claim to originality, had undeniably the merit of cheapness. Amongst other humble individuals to whose friendly offices he was indebted, was an itinerant dealer in second-hand books, a sort of half-witted creature, whose stock-in-trade consisted mostly of odd volumes, which he carried in a bag when he went on his rounds on the outlook for customers. This was the man from whom he had bought the mutilated Johnson's *Dictionary*. From this same person he bought for a few pence an old volume of Hume's *History*. Having devoured the contents of this volume, he prevailed on the dealer so far as to get him to exchange it for an odd volume of Addison's *Spectator*, and after reading this, he had it exchanged for a third. In this manner, by continuing the process of exchange he became familiar

with the writings of not a few of the best English authors, without any further outlay than the expenditure of the few coppers on his first purchase, for no money passed between them in any of their subsequent barterings. How this trafficker in books managed to make his living is not stated; it can hardly be supposed that he was so generously accommodating to all his patrons.

By thus assiduously gleaning in the field of English literature wherever and whenever opportunity chanced in his way, Lal Behari went on steadily adding to his accumulating stock of knowledge. The paucity of books at his command, serious disadvantage though it was, had one good effect upon him, since it trained him to constantly cultivate the habit of carefully noting down and storing in his memory every scrap of useful information that fell in his way. The following incident, trifling as it seems, tells its own tale of how eagerly the young student was on the watch for any hint by which he might profit, and with what diligence he applied himself to finding out the means of turning it to good account. It was the custom of the General Assembly's Institution to set apart the last day of the week for visitors, which was for that reason popularly known among the students as "Visitors' Day." Every Saturday those in the more advanced classes met in the lecture-room. These Saturday meetings were a sort of public examinations conducted by the visitors, who, being generally persons actively interested in education, were always invited to put questions to the assembled students in order to test their acquirements. On one of these occasions, the then Secretary of the Council of Education happened to be present, who, after examining the



students, complimented them highly upon the extent of their knowledge, at the same time remarking that their English in point of accent and style was faulty, and might be easily improved. Lal Behari was not slow to take the hint, and lost no time in procuring a copy of Walker's *Pronouncing Dictionary* (he was now in the College Department, and no longer dependent on his dealer in second-hand books). In his hands the dictionary did not lie idle, for he carefully looked up and took note of the pronunciation of every word about which he had the least doubt. Making Addison's *Spectator* his model, he energetically set about improving his style, sparing himself no labour in order to thoroughly master its intricacies.

There is one circumstance worth noticing here, only because it is likely to have stimulated his zeal and helped in urging him to go forward with his studies at a time when he was most in need of encouragement. The youth of Bengal have never been backward in their desire to obtain a good English education, and at no time has their rivalry been more wholesome or competition in this direction keener than in the years when Lal Behari was a student. To this fact he has himself incidentally borne testimony in his spirited description—much admired at the time it was written—of what he styled the "Battle between the Orientalists and the Anglicists," from which we cull the following passage. It ought perhaps to be stated that through the Government declaring in favour of English education, this heated controversy among Calcutta educationalists practically came to an end about the time that Lal Behari became a pupil in the General Assembly's Institution. "It was in 1823," as Mr. Day records it, "that the

Committee of Public Instruction was organised by Mr. Adam, who stated its object to be the 'considering, and from time to time submitting to Government, the suggestion of such measures as it may appear expedient to adopt with a view to the better instruction of the people, to the introduction of useful knowledge, including the sciences and arts of Europe, and to the improvement of their moral character.' The committee were at first not overburdened with work, as they had only two colleges under their supervision—the Madrussa College of Calcutta and the Sanskrit College of Benares. In the following year, however, the Sanskrit College of Calcutta was opened; in 1825 was established the Delhi College for giving instruction in Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit; and the Hindu College of Calcutta, though originally a private institution, was admitted into the pale of the Committees' patronage. Though English classes were opened in some of the colleges, the labours of the committee were directed chiefly to the promotion of Oriental learning. As the people were averse to learning Arabic and Sanskrit, pupils were bribed into those studies by stipends tenable for twelve or fifteen years. Large sums were spent in the reprinting of Sanskrit and Arabic works, containing for the most part an unhealthy literature, questionable ethics, and false science; and equally large sums were spent in translating European works on science into Arabic. While the Government was thus engaged in encouraging the teaching of false history, false astronomy, false medicine, the instincts of the people themselves were leading them in a different direction. The Hindu College, the Oriental Seminary, the General Assembly's Institution, and other English schools of the metro-

polis, were creating a thirst for English knowledge. While Arabic and Sanskrit students had to be bribed into learning those languages, the doors of the English schools were crowded with boys begging for admission ; while Arabic and Sanskrit books had scarcely a single purchaser, the School Book Society sold seven or eight thousand volumes every year, and not only paid the expenses of printing, but realised a profit of 20 per cent. on the outlay." In this crowd of youthful aspirants thirsting after knowledge, Lal Behari soon discovered that he was not last in the race. Borne on by the general enthusiasm, he felt the pinch of poverty less keenly, which, as he steadily gained a leading position, pressed less and less heavily upon him.

In reviewing the hard experiences of his boyhood, it was never a subject of regret to him that he had had to pass through them, nor did he lament that his lot had not been easier when first left to fight his battle alone. To be early forced to trust to one's own energies is not always an evil, and we may take it that Mr. Day did not in after-life look upon the trials of his schooldays in their ultimate moral effect upon himself as otherwise than salutary. They had taught him the value of self-reliance by revealing to him his own strength and the resources that lay within himself. It can certainly be truly said of him that through the rest of his life he never betrayed any want of self-confidence, and that, when occasion arose, he did not shrink from deciding for himself while resolutely adhering to the line of conduct he had determined to follow. Long after, when he was actively engaged in teaching, he drew a comparison between the educational advantages enjoyed by the

young student of a later period and the severer task imposed upon the young men who crowded the schools and colleges when he was prosecuting his studies. The comparison, as may be seen from the following short passage, was far from being in favour of the former:—"In the year of grace 1873, the acquisition of English learning in India, at anyrate in Bengal, has been rendered, so far as external helps are concerned, very easy. There are 'Meaning-Books' of every elementary class-book used in every school in the country; and there are 'Notes,' 'Annotations,' 'Paraphrases,' and 'Keys' without end. But it was different thirty-five years ago. Then there was not a single 'Meaning-Book' or 'Note-Book' of a single class-book. I do not say that the youth of the country are to be congratulated on the abundance of 'Keys' and 'Commentaries'; on the contrary, I think they are much to be pitied. . . . The result is that our schools and colleges, for the most part, are filled with intellectual lotus-eaters, who are averse to mental exertion of any sort, and who know not the pains and pleasures of mental exercise, as they readily get knowledge without that exercise. A more pernicious system for ruining the intellect of the youth of the country, and of turning human beings into automatons, it would be difficult to contrive. In these days of cheap postage and cheap newspapers, learning too has been made cheap—indeed, so cheap that it is well-nigh worthless. In the brave days of old, that is to say, about thirty-five years ago, when I was a school-boy, we had to rely on our own resources. We had no 'Keys' like those manufactured in these days of universal machinery, wherewith to unlock the treasure-house of knowledge, and no 'Abstracts' which contain,

hermetically sealed, the quintessence of wisdom. In the year of grace 1873, the palace of wisdom has already been constructed for you. It has been finished and furnished for you. You have only to enter and possess it. It was different with us in those hard times of old. We had to dig; we had to clear the rubbish; we had to collect the brick, or rather make the bricks—and often without straw being given to us; we had to cut wood and draw water, like intellectual Gibeonites; we had to build laboriously day after day, and month after month,—and then at last, after several years' incessant labour, did the building rear its head. The former method is by far the pleasanter of the two; but whether it is as healthy and useful as it is pleasant may well be doubted." In adversely criticising some of the methods of teaching that had crept into the schools and colleges, he recalled to mind the rugged road over which he had had to travel, nor was it without a feeling of pride that he remembered the "brave days of old," when the student's mind was braced by the very exertions it was called on to make. On his strictures it is not for us to make any comment, though we confess to believing him well qualified to speak authoritatively, and not likely to form his opinions on insufficient grounds.

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To all matters relating to education he devoted his closest attention, and if he sometimes disapproved of the methods pursued it was because he was thoroughly in earnest in seeking to promote the spread of a sound healthy education among all classes of his countrymen. He was not only conversant with the state of education throughout India, but by careful study he had obtained a clear and comprehensive grasp of the history

and progress of education in other countries. Both by speech and writing he urged the introduction of reform in this direction, and it may be said that his views were generally in advance of even the more enlightened of his contemporaries. As an instance in point, we need refer only to his lecture delivered before the Bethune Society in 1868, which was afterwards published with a dedication to Lord Lawrence. In speaking in favour of a compulsory system of education which would reach the lowest classes of the people, he thus expressed himself: "It is now time to say a few words on the nature of the instruction to be given in the primary schools and the character of the system to be adopted. Of course, the chief subjects to be taught are, as I have already said, reading, writing, and arithmetic—these instrumental arts being most useful in the business of life. The books of reading should largely contain lessons on common things, and the objects of the three kingdoms of Nature—the animal, the vegetable, and the mineral; lessons on agriculture; and lessons on morality, prudence, and economy. To these might be advantageously added elementary bookkeeping, zemindari accounts, simple composition, especially letter-writing, some geography, some history, and gymnastics; this last, that is gymnastics, I would introduce into every primary school with a view to strengthen, if possible, the proverbially feeble constitution of the Bengali." Such were the subjects which he considered primary education ought to embrace and ought to be made compulsory. It had been plausibly argued that with some assistance voluntary schools would suffice to meet the national wants. In opposition to this, Mr. Day affirmed that unless primary education was made

compulsory, the lowest classes would still remain, as hitherto, steeped in ignorance, and his chief reason for this belief he found in the past history and temperament of the people. Voluntary education, if it were to succeed anywhere could only do so among people accustomed to freedom, and to take the initiative in reforms upon themselves. But this would not apply to the Bengali, "in whose national history—if his nation has a history—the name of liberty is an unknown sound" (we are quoting from the Lecture). "For the last six hundred years he has been under foreign domination, and in ages gone by when he had kings of his own race, he was consigned to the tender mercies of a grinding despotism, and of a sacerdotalism which regarded him as a slave. So far from looking upon Government as a necessary evil, he looks upon it as his *Ma-Bap*—his father and mother. Among such a Government-ridden people, the voluntary principle must be an unmeaning phrase."

In our next chapter we shall try to narrate the story of Mr. Day's conversion to Christianity, but before proceeding to do so, we may here note that Mr. Day was not brought into personal contact with Dr. Duff until the last years of his school life. Those acquainted with the history of the Scottish Missions in Bengal are aware that Dr. Duff left India in 1834 to recruit his health, and did not return till 1840. During his first six years at the General Assembly's Institution, Lal Behari knew its founder only by report. He had indeed seen Dr. Duff before he had to hurry away, but had just barely seen him.

## CHAPTER II

### CONVERSION TO CHRISTIANITY

WHEN nineteen years of age, Lal Behari Day finally resolved to break with Hinduism and to adopt the Christian religion as his rule of faith. As this was for him the most important event in his life, the circumstances leading up to that decisive step shall be related as far as possible in his own words. Broadly speaking, four external influences tending in the same direction, operated to induce him to change his religion. These were—first, his higher education, especially on its scientific side, had destroyed altogether his belief in the religion in which he had been nurtured; secondly, the Christian character of the teaching in the General Assembly's Institution, which familiarised him with the doctrines of Christianity; thirdly, the piety and learning of his missionary teachers, for whom he acquired great veneration; and lastly, his close association and friendly intercourse with two very estimable young men, who had a few years previously embraced the Christian faith.

A short passage in his narrative of a journey from Calcutta to his native village of Talpur at the beginning of a winter school vacation, gives an insight into his attitude of mind towards Hinduism



some years before he formally renounced it. The Ram Pal mentioned was the monthly postman, who also acted as a guide to travellers between Calcutta and Talpur. Treveni, where they landed in the morning after sailing most of the night, was situated on the banks of the Hooghly about thirty miles above Calcutta. "The first thing we did on landing," narrates Mr. Day, "was to take a bath in the river, which Ram Pal enjoyed more than I, for not only was his body refreshed, but, as he believed, his soul was cleansed from sin, as the waters of the river at Treveni are reckoned peculiarly holy. As for me, though I was refreshed in my body, my soul derived no benefit, as my English education had disburdened me of such superstitious notions."

For a time he drifted aimlessly about on a troubled sea of doubt, not knowing what course to steer, uncertain as to what haven he might be carried, or whether he would reach any haven at all, and yet it would appear that all the while the set of the current of his thoughts was silently bearing him onwards towards Christianity. Had the teaching of the General Assembly's Institution been opposed to religion, or had it professed to maintain a strictly neutral attitude towards conflicting creeds, there is no saying how long he might have continued to be tossed about. But it was far from being either. Its first and foremost object was to bring those living outside the pale of Christianity into the Christian fold, and its uprooting of old beliefs was but an incident in preparing the way for instilling into youthful minds the doctrines of a higher faith; obstructions that would prevent the growth of seed sown had to be cleared away. Of the extent to which

religious instruction pervaded, and how closely it was interwoven with the teaching in that institution, Mr. Day has borne testimony in the following passage:—

“The course of studies pursued in the General Assembly’s Institution was thoroughly saturated with the spirit of the Christian religion from the lowest to the highest class. The very first primer that was put into the hands of a boy learning the English alphabet contained some facts and doctrines of that religion, and the course of studies was so regulated that his knowledge of Christianity increased in the same ratio with his knowledge of English. . . . The students were thoroughly grounded in a course of Natural Theology, a course on the evidences of Christianity, a short course of Ecclesiastical History, besides a course of lectures on the whole of the Holy Scriptures from the Book of Genesis to the Book of Revelation. In addition to these Christian appliances of the classroom, public lectures were delivered by the Professors to the students on Sunday evenings.”

The object of these Sunday evening lectures was to enforce the lessons imparted in the classroom during the week-days. The congregation was composed chiefly, though not wholly, of students. Though under no compulsion to attend these lectures, Lal Behari, while a student, was a most regular listener. Judging from the following statement of his reasons for his punctual attendance, he would seem to have had no very definite motive for doing so, and certainly no very serious thoughts of becoming a Christian. “Of these lectures,” he says, “I was a most regular listener. I seldom missed any of them unless severe indisposition kept me confined to my house. If I am asked what led me to attend these lectures

so regularly, I do not know that I can give a satisfactory answer. Though I was at that time of an inquiring disposition, I can hardly say that the pure spirit of religious inquiry impelled me to attend those lectures. Was it then the simple desire of hearing eloquent discourses—and I have always agreed with Milton, who says that ‘song charms the sense, but eloquence the soul’? No, not that either, for religion had something to do with my attendance, though not exclusively. Was it then the desire of spending an evening agreeably? Well that might have been one of my objects, but not the only or even the chief one. Whatever the reason was, I always attended the lectures, because I found they did my heart good and improved my intellect.”

With this brief reference to the character of the teaching in the General Assembly’s Institution, we pass on to notice the third and most effective influence at work, which helped him to accept and hold fast by Christianity as his only faith. But for this influence it is hard to say how long he might have read theology, or how many lectures, however eloquent, he might have listened to before he arrived at the conviction that only in turning unto Jesus of Nazareth could he find peace to his soul. To his missionary teachers, Mr. Day acknowledged himself indebted for the unfolding of his intellectual and moral being. “Next to my father and mother,” he wrote, “who brought me into the world, and who nourished and cherished me during the helpless years of infancy, I am indebted for the development of my mind and the formation of my character to five missionary fathers—the Rev. Dr. Duff, the Rev. Dr. Mackay, the Rev. Dr. Ewart, the Rev. John Macdonald, and the Rev. Dr.

Thomas Smith." Of these five, the first four died before Dr. Day, the last is still living. They were all highly gifted teachers as well as earnest spiritually minded men, whose devotion to the cause of Christianity could hardly fail to deeply impress the minds of the more thoughtful of their students. Many years after, when the first four of his five missionary fathers had been called to their rest, Mr. Day described the character of their work and lives as it had imprinted itself on his mind during his student days, modestly forbidding him saying much about Dr. Smith, who survived him. Everyone of these missionary fathers was to him a living example of the power of Christian faith to ennoble men's lives. We shall confine ourselves to a short extract from his "In Memoriam" sketch of one of them. It runs as follows:—"But the best lesson I learned from Dr. Ewart was the lesson derived from his own life. The perfect equanimity of his temper; his freedom from all prejudice; the philosophical coolness of his judgment; his frankness, which was transparently visible in his countenance; the rigid uprightness of his character, never swerving in the slightest degree from the path of rectitude; his gentleness, which more resembled that of a woman than of a stalwart man upwards of six feet high; his wonderful patience in listening to the complaints of his pupils; his kindness to poor heathen students, assisting some with books, and others with means of livelihood from his own pocket; the lively interest he took in the welfare of those who had at any period of their lives sat at his feet for instruction, readily giving them letters of recommendation, and endeavouring to get employment for them; and, above all, his charity, which never led him to think evil of any man, Hindu,

Mohammedan, or Christian,—the exhibition of these virtues in his daily life and conversation was to me more instructive than a course of lectures on ethics or a whole body of divinity. These virtues I perceived in him when I was a student; but he had other virtues which I perceived in after-life when I came into closer contact with him." His respect for his other missionary fathers was equally great, and it can easily be understood how the love and veneration inspired by such teachers should, if slowly, steadily draw the young student towards Christianity. But apart altogether from the effects on his views of religion produced by living in contact with men whose daily life proved their steadfast belief in the faith they professed, Mr. Day's warm tribute of affection to the memory of his teachers reminds us of a pleasing phase of his own nature. No one who had shown him an act of kindness was ever forgotten by him. Be it a poor deformed cook, a half-witted bookseller, a cousin whose timely generosity had helped him, his missionary fathers, or a fellow-student, they all alike were treasured up in some corner of his memory, and held in grateful remembrance by him.

Not seldom does it happen that a young man's moral and religious sentiments are deeply tinged by the character of his more immediate associates. During his early student days, Lal Behari formed a close companionship and intimate friendship with two young men of great promise, Mahendra Lal Basak and Kailas Chandra Mukerjee, in whose society he was in the habit of spending his Sunday afternoons. Though only about a year older than himself, they both became converts to Christianity some years before him; they were baptized in 1839, the year before he

entered the College classes, while he did not receive the rite of baptism until 1843. In the year 1845 they both died within a few weeks of each other at the early age of twenty-two; but time could not efface their names nor the hours they had spent together from Mr. Day's memory. To what extent their conversation and example must have told upon him in dispelling his doubts, may be gathered from his own words describing the manner in which the three companions spent their Sunday afternoons together. In after years, when his thoughts turned back on the hours he had passed in sweet communion with them, he wrote:—"With two converts residing on the premises of the Institution, Mahendra Lal Basak and Kailas Chandra Mukerjea, I was intimate. Mahendra was decidedly the most intellectual Bengali that I have ever seen. Whatever subject he applied his mind to, he mastered. He was great in literature, great in mathematics, great in metaphysics. Mahendra was in truth, in the highest sense of the word, an original thinker. If he had not been prematurely cut off he would doubtless have been one of India's greatest sons. The other convert, Kailas Chandra Mukerjea, had none of the intellectual greatness of his comrade, but he was morally and spiritually great, and the most lovable of human beings. He was the meekest, gentlest, most unassuming of men, and I never saw him but I said in my mind, 'Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.' They were both prematurely cut off. They were pleasant in their lives, and in death they were not divided, for they both went to their rest within a few weeks of each other. Such were the two Christian friends in whose company I, nominally a Hindu,

spent the Sunday afternoons. Kailas was not all the time with us; but Mahendra and I sat together from two to six o'clock in the evening, talking and reading to each other. I was generally the reader and Mahendra the listener. And there he sat in a corner of the room for hours with his eyes shut, and his mind completely absorbed. If he failed to catch the sense of any passage read, he would call out, 'Brother, read that passage over again.' We read, of course, religious books, as Mahendra, being a Christian and a Presbyterian, would not read anything else on Sundays. In this way he and I went through Milton's 'Paradise Lost' and 'Paradise Regained,' Young's *Night Thoughts*, Pollok's *Course of Time*, Graham's *Sabbath*, and several volumes of sermons by distinguished English and Scotch divines." As one reads such passages one can hardly escape observing that Mr. Day was a man of a strongly emotional nature. Of a sympathetic disposition himself, his heart went forth to everything that was gentle and lovable, and every finer trait of human nature in whomsoever displayed, awakened into responsive vibration some chord within his breast. But in this matter of religion his warmth of feeling told in two opposite ways. If his veneration for his teachers and brotherly friendship towards his companions helped to pave his way to becoming a follower of Christ, a kind father's memory and a mother's love pressed heavily on him, urging him to hold fast by the religion of his forefathers. Perhaps no one who is not fully acquainted with Hindu family life can truly appreciate how great a wrench the abandoning of Hinduism implies. But of this something more will be said hereafter.

In narrating the train of circumstances under the combined influence of which Lal Behari Day was first weaned from Hinduism, and then after a season brought into the bosom of the Church of Christ, there is of course no need to point out that these did not form the grounds for his accepting his new faith. They were but its credentials, so to speak, recommending it to his favourable consideration and giving it a title to his confidence. When passing from one religion to another, he spent some time in what must have been to him a dry arid desert of doubt and uncertainty, but he can scarcely be said to have ever paused "in the centre of indifference." Beneath the withering and dying remains of the old faith, the seeds of the new silently struck root in his heart, ready to spring up, blossom, and bear fruit in their appointed season. It is true that in a letter to Dr. Duff he speaks of the day of his "heartless and cold scepticism and practical atheism," but he immediately adds, "the name of Jesus was ever associated in my mind with everything that is holy, good, and virtuous, so that in point of fact I do not remember at this moment any day in my past life when I was an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and lived without God, without Christ, without hope in this world, if any day I vilified the name of Jesus, spoke evil of Christians, and spoke against divine Christianity. In my worst days—days of daring impiety and godlessness—I had a *respect* for the religion of Jesus. This was owing, I believe, to the early saturation of my mind with its blessed principles." With him religion was an essential part of his existence; without religion there could be no peace and happiness for him, and even if cold scepticism did take posses-



sion of him for a season, it never was capable of wholly extinguishing in his soul a yearning after diviner things. The "early saturation" of his mind must be understood to refer to a date posterior to his arrival in Calcutta, as he was not likely to have heard the name of Jesus before leaving his village home; and if he did, it could have been to him but a name. But as already seen, the earliest passages in his life were of a kind to imbue him with a spirit of reverence, and he possessed, in full measure, that religiosity which, according to his own testimony, amounted almost to a racial characteristic of his countrymen, only his mind refused to bow down before anything that was not pure, holy, and true. Once when speaking of, and again when speaking to, them, he addressed them in these terms:—"A Hindu is the most religious being in existence. He gets up from his bed religiously, anoints his body religiously, washes religiously, dresses religiously, sits religiously, stands religiously, eats religiously, drinks religiously, sleeps religiously, learns religiously, remains ignorant religiously, and becomes irreligious religiously. It is this religiousness, forming so prominent a part of Hindu character, and called into activity by the combined influence of English education and Christian missions, which has created that spirit of religious inquiry over which I am now rejoicing." To the European this catalogue of the acts of daily life with which religion is interwoven may appear somewhat absurd, but it hardly overstates the fact, and, humanly speaking, would likely have been applicable to Mr. Day himself had his education stopped short at the village school. Whatever blemishes may disfigure Hinduism, earnestness on the part of its votaries is

not one of them. This spirit of earnestness, implanted in him in his childhood, he never lost, but carried it with him into his Christian life. In his letter to Dr. Duff, from which we quoted above, he made the remarkable statement that he loved the name of Jesus when he first heard it pronounced, though he could not explain why. If he could offer no explanation, any attempt at doing so on our part would at best be mere idle conjecture. About the fact itself there need be no doubt, and it shows that in approaching the religion under whose guidance he was to steer his course down the stream of time, he had no strong bias against it to contend with, nor violent prejudices to overcome. •

What his feelings were at the prospect of severing his connection with Hinduism, what scruples he had, what doubts troubled him, while pondering on the subject as he lingered at the parting of the ways, and made him hesitate to become a proselyte to Christianity, can only be imperfectly told. His mental struggle at that period was not a side of his experiences that he cared to dwell upon. He did indeed, at the urgent request of his friend, the Rev. G. H. Rouse, dictate to Mrs. Day a tract of four pages, in which he related the circumstances under which he obtained religious Christian impressions before his baptism. The original was in English, and it was translated into Bengali for the use of inquirers. At the age of seventy the impressions made on the mind at twenty are not usually vivid. When he dictated this tract relating his impressions of fifty years before, he had lost his eyesight, and age was creeping fast upon him. With the exception of this brief record, which he gave in response to the

earnest solicitations of his friend, he left nothing to tell directly what mental trials he went through before definitely deciding for Christianity. At the time of his conversion he kept no diary, nor had he any absent friend to whom he might have opened his mind freely in correspondence. Frequent and earnest discussions on religion took place between him and his two convert companions, but these were never committed to writing. He certainly was a diligent student of the Bible for some years before he abandoned Hinduism; and how thoroughly and effectively he prosecuted this study the following circumstances afford ample evidence. In 1841, almost two years before his receiving the rite of baptism, he gained two prizes which were open to and competed for by students from all the College classes of the General Assembly's Institution. One of these was for the "most accurate knowledge of Scripture proofs for doctrines," while the other was for an essay on the "Conversion of St. Paul, viewed as an argument for the Truth of the Gospel"; the money value of these prizes was respectively twenty-five and thirty-five rupees. Next year he won a prize of fifty rupees, offered by Dr. Charles, the then senior chaplain of the Scotch Church in Calcutta, for the best essay on the "Falsity of the Hindu Religion." When Dr. Charles read Lal Behari Day's essay, he concluded from its tone that it had been written by a convert, and was greatly surprised to learn that it had been written by one who was still nominally a Hindu. A short time after this prize had been awarded to him, he went, in the company of some converts, to the weekly prayer-meeting held in St. Andrew's Church. At the close of the service he was asked by Dr.

Charles whether he was soon coming forward as a candidate for baptism, but he remained silent. He declined to be hurried into a profession of Christianity until he fully knew his own mind. It was too solemn a step to be taken lightly, and for six months longer he continued to weigh the matter over before coming to a decision. After much heedful consideration and earnest meditation, he resolved to present himself as a candidate for baptism in July 1843. Many thoughts must have occurred to him during these months while he fluctuated between hope and fear. Pity it is that he did not note some of them down while still fresh in his memory. But the inner workings of his mind he either did not think worth preserving or else shrank from laying them bare to the world, and they could only be surmised by his outward actions, except for incidental references to the subject in his lectures.

In an obituary notice of Mr. Day, giving a sketch of his life, a writer in one of the Calcutta daily newspapers, in speaking of his conversion, took occasion so far justly to remark that "the human soul which passes from one passionate ultimate conception of the origin of the universe and its Author to another, parts with all its trappings, its customs, its habits, its outward forms; the soul which has had a religion and worshipped in it and loved and served in it and painfully changed it for a supposed better, its story is worth telling. If among Mr. Day's papers there be an account of his transmigration from Hinduism to Christianity, the inquiring world will be its debtor." That the act of parting from the religion of his boyhood was painful to him, and that he keenly felt the sacrifice he was called on to make, there is every

reason to believe, but it is highly probable that his conception of the Author of the universe was almost from the first rather Christian than Hindu, for as he grew in stature and in knowledge, his reason refused to accept the religion of his fathers as divine truth. But as has just been mentioned, he left behind him no account which would give a clear insight into the thoughts revolving in his mind as he meditated on the subject of changing his religion. From the following letter, however, which he wrote within three years after his being baptized, it would not be difficult to form some idea of his attitude of mind as well as his reasons for becoming a Christian, since it is not unreasonable to suppose that the words addressed to his correspondent flowed from the fulness of his own experiences. It was addressed to his Hindu friend, G. M. Tagore, who was at that time an inquirer after Christ, and shortly afterwards joined the Church of England. It was to this gentleman, with whom he kept up a close and uninterrupted friendship, that Mr. Day, twenty-five years later, dedicated his lecture on "The Desirableness and Practicability of Organising a National Church in Bengal." In dedicating it, he wrote: "I was not a little affected when, after delivering the following address, you alluded in your speech to those happy days when you and I discussed together the great subject of Religion, and read together the original documents of our holy faith. The result of these readings and discussions was that you, like Moses, disregarded the reversion of a rich estate, and cast in your lot with the people of God." His letter to Mr. Tagore, setting before him, while yet a Hindu, the fundamentals of the Christian faith, ran as follows:—

"7th June 1846.

"MY DEAR SIR,—It is impossible to convey to your mind an idea of the intense delight I felt on receiving your favour of Saturday last. I thank my God that He has enabled you to believe in the divinity of the Lord Jesus, and that He has cleared your way through the flimsy sophistries of a most irrational Socinianism. On perusing your note, I was not sure, for it does not say anything on that point, whether you believed in the doctrine of the atonement,—the most conspicuous and brilliant doctrine by far in the galaxy of Christian tenets. Without this doctrine Christianity were a system of revealed philosophical deism, the world without a ray of hope, and man reduced to despair; for it is the balm of consolation to the wounded spirit of man, the stay, the support, the comfort of the sinner. But when in the evening of the same day I heard from you that you believed in it, my spirit was overjoyed. Surely the language of your mouth now, I have no doubt, is 'Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.'

"But, dear sir, allow me to impress upon you a common, but nevertheless an all-important, truth, namely, that a mere *intellectual* and *speculative* faith in the doctrine of the Bible can never save a man. I might believe *historically* in the Jesus Christ, *intellectually* in the doctrine of the atonement—of original sin; of substitutionary sacrifice; of unmerited pardon; of the resurrection of the Christian and the unbeliever unto life and damnation, yet I might not be saved. Orthodoxy in doctrine is not an infallible test of one's eternal safety. Many orthodox professors shall surely go down into the infernal pit. Satan, I suppose, *intellectually, speculatively*, and merely so, is

the most orthodox professor. A thorough-felt and overwhelming conviction of one's utter sinfulness in the sight of Heaven ; of the impossibility of his obtaining salvation by anything that he can do ; and of the all-sufficiency of the atonement made by Christ ; and appropriation of Christ by means of a living faith ; a going forth of the soul to Him at all times and under all circumstances ; a forsaking of darling bosom sins ; a loving and delighting in internal purity of the heart ; a diligence to keep the heart with care, for out of it are the issues of life ; a constant-felt and habitual dependence on Almighty grace,—all these can alone afford to a sinner a well-grounded hope of eternal happiness."

The remaining portion of this letter deals with the question of sects in the Christian Church and the relative merits of the different forms of Church government. He discusses the subject at some length, but we quote only two sentences, in which he says : "It is not only desirable, but it is our bounden duty to stand connected with a Church which is after the model of the scriptural Church, which maintains purity of doctrine, which has an evangelical ministry in it, and which, by its constitution and institutions, tends to the alarming of the ungodly, the awakening of the careless, and the edification of the saints. One form is more scriptural in its constitution than another, and to know which is most scriptural is an important point ; but you must grant, dear sir, that important as it is in some respects, it loses its significance when compared with the saving doctrines of Christianity." In these clear unhesitating terms did Mr. Day set forth before his young inquiring friend what was, in substance, his own confession of faith,

with his conception of the Christian life which it involved. His concluding observation, in which he points out that the distinctions of sects sink into insignificance when compared with a living belief in the essential doctrines of Christianity, deserves some attention, because it is the keynote to his address, delivered nearly a quarter of a century after this letter was written, on "The Desirableness and Practicability of Organising a National Church in Bengal." From this address we excerpt the passage in which he suggests a broad doctrinal basis on which a united Church of Native Christians might be founded. After lamenting the evils and the hindrances to the spread of Christianity caused by the variety of beliefs with regard to doctrines, he proceeds to assert that the difficulties of removing them were not insuperable, and ends by stating how far he himself was prepared to go in order to meet them.

"I would construct the United National Church of Bengal on the broadest possible basis," he said, "so as, to include in its communion a great variety of opinions. And I know not a broader creed than what is called the *Apostles' Creed*, or *The Creed*, by way of eminence. That it was composed by the inspired apostles themselves, I do not believe; nevertheless it is sufficient for us to know that it embodies within its brief compass the essential teaching of the holy Scriptures, that it comprises a summary of those articles a belief in which is necessary to salvation, that it was the *symbolum* of the primitive church, and that in the days of the apostolical fathers it was put into the hands of catechumens who recited it at their baptism as their confession of faith. I would, therefore, make the *Apostles' Creed*, with the exception of one article, the



creed of the United Church of Bengal. The exception to which I allude is the article on the descent of Christ into Hades. I would expunge it from the creed, partly because it might give rise to unnecessary controversy, and partly because it is not to be found in its most ancient forms as preserved in the writings of the apostolical fathers. By founding the United Church of Bengal on so broad and catholic a basis, we should be in communion with every Church in Christendom, the Greek and Latin Churches not excepted. I for one would rejoice if our brethren of the Native Roman Catholic Church of Bengal could unite with us in the formation of a National Church, which they could do by abjuring the dogmas of the infallibility of the pope and the insufficiency of the holy Scriptures as a rule of faith; for I look upon the Roman Catholic Church, though disfigured with corruption, as a branch of the true visible Church of Christ." Earnest Christian that he was, Mr. Day had but imperfect sympathy for the fine-drawn distinctions of dogmatic theology, and with narrow sectarianism he had none at all. Neither of these possessed attractions for him, and his broad catholicity of mind, which made him tolerant towards those who differed from him in opinion when there was room for doubt, seems to be quite in keeping with, and what might have been expected in, one of his intellectual calibre. The various Churches of Christendom derived their light and life from the same source, and the grounds of their division paled before the splendour of the grand central truths of the gospel, which were common to all the Churches. This was the leading idea of his address on the formation of a united National Church of Bengal; and this was no new idea to him, for it was clearly present in his

mind, if in a less expanded form, at the time of his conversion.

To the Christian convert from Hinduism in those days, the severest ordeal he had to undergo was the complete and utter separation from all relatives who were near and dear to him, which the abjuration of his first religion entailed upon him. Could he have wholly obliterated the past from his thoughts, could he have erased from his memory the fond parental affection lavished upon him during his helpless years of infancy, could he have turned a flinty heart to a mother's tears as she wept over what seemed to her the loss of her darling son for ever, then he would have been saved much sorrow and sadness. But would such a one have been a desirable member of a Christian Church? The following passage from Mr. Day's Journal of a Preaching Tour, undertaken in the beginning of 1849, rather more than five years after his baptism, will help the reader to conceive how hard the trial was to one of his sensitive nature. Though he does not distinctly say so, this apparently was the first occasion of his revisiting the place of his birth after cutting himself adrift from the religion of his boyhood. "The sun had declined from his meridian height," so the entry in his Journal runs, "when I saw the tall trees of my nativity looming through the distance. The scene of my childhood; the fields thickly covered with grain, sugar-cane, and cotton; the raised and high embankments of my native tanks (ponds), covered with mango- and palm-trees and the stately *asvatha* (*Ficus religiosa*), intertwined as these were with my boyish associations, produced on me feelings not to be described. When I stood before the door of my own home, to me as

*familiar as the face of an old friend, instead of being greeted with rejoicings, I was welcomed with cries and tears.* The report of my coming had gone forth before I reached the village, and the whole neighbourhood had come out to greet me. On every side nothing was seen or heard but lamentations, mourning, and woe. Scenes like these—scenes created by causes little understood by foreigners on account of their connection with the inner texture of Hindu manners—occur to every native convert, and constitute, after all, his chief privation, and the influence of which is felt by him more than the loss of the wealth of Ormuz, India, or the late discovered Eldorado of California.” At this point he abruptly breaks off his narrative, as though the subject were too painful for him, and diverges into an altogether different topic.

In the Journals of other preaching tours he has described similar pathetic scenes in the life of a fellow-convert. The description, if somewhat lengthy, will help those brought up in a Christian country, or in a Christian family, to comprehend better the sacrifices converts from Hinduism had to make, and the severe tests their faith was put to. The following is taken almost *verbatim* from Mr. Day’s diaries of two mission tours made by himself in company with a brother-convert, whom he designates as L—— :—  
“About midday we came to L——’s native place. His mother and friends treated us very kindly. It would be impossible for Europeans to form an adequate idea of the sacrifices which a respectable native makes when embracing the Christian religion. We speak not of pecuniary sacrifices, but we speak of the rending of the social, paternal, filial, and fraternal ties, which is the immediate effect of the conversion of a

*Hindu youth.* This is rendered inevitable from the institution of caste, which has taken false hold upon the minds of the Hindus. And the separation of a native Christian from his family is more felt in this country than it would be in any other for another reason, namely, that in this country, fathers, mothers, sons and their wives, all live together. L——'s mother wept bitterly when she saw him. Nor was she alone in this, for several other women soon caught the infection; nor could L—— remain without weeping. The scene was affecting beyond description. L——'s mother cooked for him and his friends, and she herself placed food before them, as if they had not become Christians. The news of our arrival having soon spread through the village, all sorts of men, women, and children came to see L——." Next year they together revisited L——'s native village, and Mr. Day again thus describes their reception: "L—— was received by his mother and brother with the greatest kindness, and mixed feelings of joy and sorrow,—joy, in seeing her son before her, sorrow that he had embraced the Christian religion. Many were the men and women and children that came to see him, and wept with great lamentation over him. He conversed on Christianity with his first teacher, who had taught him the Bengali alphabet. After L—— had retired for the night and composed himself to sleep in the same room with his brother, a scene, which can never be effaced from the tablet of his memory, occurred. It was past midnight. L——'s mother had laid herself on her bed, but had enjoyed no repose. Her mind had been brooding over the tender recollections of his youthful days, and her troubled spirit had found no rest; she had wept. And now at one o'clock in the

morning, not being able to contain herself, she opens the door and comes to L——'s bed, kisses him with ecstatic fondness, bedews his face with her tears, and sobs and weeps aloud. L——, who had hitherto been asleep, becomes suddenly awakened. No words could convey a sufficient idea of the emotions with which his mind was filled. His mother again and again, in a fit of ecstasy, clasped him in her arms and kissed him. This was too much for human nature to bear, and L——, giving way to tears, cried out to God, 'Oh, my Father, have mercy upon my poor mother; convert her soul, and then, by Thy grace, shall we dwell together in the mansions of eternal glory.'" Pathetic scenes such as these profoundly excited Mr. Day's sympathy, for he too had experienced like trials, which the very intensity of his emotion prevented him attempting to describe. Nor need there be any hesitation in believing that his knowledge of the pain which his avowal of Christianity would inflict on those whom he held dearest kept him back, as it has kept back many another young Hindu, from discarding Hinduism, long after he had ceased to believe in it as a religion; it accounts for his continuing to nominally profess Hinduism for some considerable time after his reason had told him that the whole system was false. The remembrance of this dilatoriness and the cause of it often appeared when he was addressing his unconverted countrymen. In his lecture on the "Resurrection of Christ," which he delivered, in the Free Church Institution forty years after his baptism, to a mixed audience of Christians and Hindus, his words to the latter were: "Some of you, I know, are convinced of the divine origin of Christianity, but have hitherto been prevented to

make a public profession of it from your attachment to your parents and friends. You must love Christ more than your father, your mother, your brothers, and sisters."

Although his reluctance to hurt the feelings of those whom he was bound by ties of nature to respect, deterred Mr. Day for a season from leaving all his old associations behind him, it was not his sole, or even his chief, reason for delaying to openly declare himself a fellower of Christ. The religious movement known as the Brahma Samaj, with its eclectic teaching, had caught and retained him for a while in its toils. In one of his lectures dealing with that sect, he recalled this in these terms: "Brahmaism," he told his audience, "does not point the way of reconciliation with God. It hangs out no light on your path to heaven. Why then trust it any longer? I myself was once a Brahma, though not in name, yet in reality. I disbelieved in book-revelation, and, like you, believed that repentance was a sufficient expiation for sin. I conscientiously believed in those Brahmaistic doctrines, and endeavoured to act in the light I then enjoyed. I became sorry for my sins, and prayed to God to forgive them. But I enjoyed no peace of mind. I could not be sure that He would pardon my sins. I had not His word of promise. This led me to think what consolation I should have if I could have God's word of promise. This led me again to inquire more fully than I had done before into the proofs of a positive revelation. I also endeavoured to reform my conduct, to amend my life. I tried to banish from my mind all evil thoughts, all sinful desires. The more I tried, the more signally I failed. I began to see my moral

deformity more than before. I began to feel that I was a great sinner, a vile transgressor of God's law. My good works, such as they were, seemed like filthy rags. Formerly I comforted myself with the thought that I was better than many of my neighbours, and thus laid the flattering unction to my soul. But now I appeared before myself in all my naked deformity. I abhorred myself; I was in despair. Then it was that the Lord took mercy upon me. He opened my eyes, and showed me Christ in all the lustre of His mediatorial glory." When groping his way towards Christianity, he had dallied a while with Brahmaism, and vainly expected that it could furnish him with the means of satisfying his spiritual cravings. It proved but a half-way house in which he could take up no permanent abode, if his soul was to find peace and comfort.

Brahmaism, as a distinct advance towards a religion purer than the grosser forms prevailing around him, had much in it to commend it to the earnest young inquirer; but as it left out the cardinal doctrine of Christianity, and had nothing to put in its place, it failed to supply a firm foundation for his faith. The foregoing extract makes his grounds for rejecting it sufficiently plain. The following passage will place them in a clearer light. It is taken from his lecture on "The Brahma Theory of Atonement," where he says: "Brahmaism represents God as a being incapable of being displeased with a sinner, let him violate all His commandments. This is the dogma of the Brahmas, and it is a dogma which is the cornerstone of the edifice of the Brahma atonement. As a Christian, I believe—and I rejoice in believing—that God is infinitely merciful, and that He is love itself.

And when Brahmas and others speak of God as love, they borrow the idea from the Christian Scriptures—for there is nothing in creation, or in the depths of intuition either, which could generate the notion that God is absolute love; on the contrary, the testimonies of nature and conscience go the other way, and show that God is a consuming fire. I say that I rejoice in believing that God is infinitely merciful, that He is love; but I also believe that every sinner is the object of divine displeasure, that God is angry with the wicked every day, and that the wicked shall be turned into hell with the nations that forget God. Brahmaism ignores the retributive justice of God, which is the opposition of the divine nature to sin which leads to the annexation of penalty to the breach of His law. The determination of God to punish sin is not *voluntary*, far less arbitrary, but *necessary*." Such, in brief, is the story of Mr. Day's conversion to Christianity. •

Here it will not be amiss to say a word as to how it came about that Mr. Day, after being admitted into the Established Church of Scotland on his embracing Christianity, spent the whole of his life, while actively engaged as a missionary and minister, in the service of the Free Church of Scotland. In May 1843 the Church of Scotland was rent in twain. In consequence of that division the missionaries in the General Assembly's Institution, in a body, left that Church and joined the newly-organised Free Church. When they opened the Free Church Institution in the following year they drew along with them the teaching staff and pupils of the General Assembly's Institution, among whom were included Lal Behari Day. Thenceforth he continued and com-



pleted his studies at the Free Church Institution. In point of fact, the doors of the General Assembly's Institution were at this time closed for nearly two years, until the Church of Scotland could arrange for their being reopened. The change was to him but little more than a change of name, for it in no respect altered his relations with his teachers, nor, as far as we know, would the course of his life have differed in any important particular from what it was, had no Disruption taken place. Accordingly we need not refer to it at length here, and we shall quote only one short passage on this subject from his *Recollections of Dr. Duff*:—

“Two or three days before my baptism,” he tells us, “Duff called me into his room, and said that he thought it proper to tell me that he was expecting to hear by an early mail that a split had already taken place in the Church of Scotland. He then stated briefly the principles which were at issue between the Church and the State; and told me that I was at liberty to join the Established Church or the outgoing ministers, just as I thought proper, though he and his colleagues had made up their minds to cast in their lot with the Evangelical party, who must have already left the Establishment. I replied, in substance, that I had not studied the question, and was no judge of its merits, though I hoped afterwards to study it. In the meantime my path of duty was plain, namely, to stick to those who had shown me the way of salvation, and who were thus my spiritual fathers.” On a later page, while on the same topic, he adds: “Though born in Bengal, of heathen parents, we, the converts, felt for the Church of Scotland as if it had been the Church

of our fathers ; and so it was, in truth, for it was the Church of our spiritual fathers." It would thus appear that personal sympathies and associations formed the tie which bound him, in the first instance, to the Free Church. Presbyterianism commended itself to his judgment as a "sweet compound of the best parts of Prelacy and Independency," but that he ever attached much weight to the minuter distinctions separating the Presbyterian Churches is, to say the least, doubtful. At a later stage we shall possibly have to add a few further remarks on this subject.

## CHAPTER III

### PASTOR AND PROFESSOR

AFTER his public profession of Christianity, Mr. Day continued for two years longer to attend, as a student, the highest college class of the Free Church Institution. In 1846 he and two other converts were appointed catechists. It was on this occasion that he wrote to a friend giving "a statement of his reason for aspiring after the office of the Christian ministry." "To some it might seem strange," he said, "but it is nevertheless a fact that the office of the ministry had attractions for me before admission into the visible Church of Christ by the rite of baptism. As far as I can remember back, the first time that I felt a desire of becoming a Christian and serving Christ in the ministry of His gospel, was on the occasion of my late excellent friends, Mahendra Lal Basak and Kailas Chandra Mukerjea, forwarding themselves to be catechists, when Dr. Duff delivered, in the lecture-room of the General Assembly's Institution, a most impressive address on the nature and the responsibility of the office of the Christian ministry. The causes which then excited this desire in me it is impossible at this distance of time to say; whether it was the external grandeur and sublimity with which the office was invested in my mind, or the express realisation of some

*favourite wishes which I might have had at the time, I cannot tell.*

“However this might have been, the perusal of the sketch of the life of that heavenly-minded man, David Brainerd, which I read shortly afterwards, strengthened this desire.”

During the next few years the three catechists prosecuted together their studies for the ministry under the supervision of the missionary professors. These studies embraced Greek, Hebrew, Church History, and Systematic Theology. In 1851 all three were licensed to preach by the Free Church Presbytery of Calcutta, and four years later they were ordained to the office of the holy ministry by the same body. On being licensed to preach, Mr. Day was sent to the Free Church Mission at Culna, but was transferred to Calcutta some time before his ordination in 1855.

While carrying on his theological studies, Mr. Day, in company with other catechists, made what he called preaching tours during the winter season through the villages and hamlets of Western Bengal, distributing tracts and copies of the New Testament to such as could read and were willing to receive them. Of these tours he kept Journals, which are largely made up of conversations and discussions with Hindus, occasionally also with Mohammedans, on the subject of religion. His Journals are of interest mainly in so far as they throw light on the religious opinions of the more educated of the rural population and the obstacles Christian missionaries had to encounter fifty years ago, though they incidentally give some idea of the state of education, as part of the object of their tours was to find out where mission schools could be planted to bear the most fruit. To illustrate the

contents of these journals, we select a few of the conversations as noted down in their pages. When sailing up the Hooghly he took the opportunity of putting a few questions to one of his boatmen whose answers were somewhat evasive. "Towards evening I had some talk with our Mohammedan boatman, who, when asked whether he repeated his daily prayers, replied that prayers and ceremonies without a good heart profit nothing. Being asked whether he believed in the existence of hell and heaven, he answered, 'Hell and heaven exist upon earth: the rich and the wealthy enjoy heaven here below, while the poor and the needy like yourself suffer hell even on earth.'"

On entering a village, Mr. Day and his companions usually made their way to the house of some one of the more respectable residents, where, as a rule, they were courteously received. The following is an instance in point:—"Accordingly we came to the house to which we had been directed. We there saw the head of the household deeply absorbed in devotion, with copper vessels before him. At the distance of two or three yards from him, a mat was spread for us to sit on. On our account, as we afterwards perceived, he stopped in the middle of his devotions and inquired the object of our visit. He spoke kindly to us for a few minutes, answered all the questions we put to him concerning the place, the condition of the people, the state of education, etc.; and then asking a pandit who was sitting by to talk with us, he proceeded with his devotions. We had a long talk of some hours with the pandit on the Vedas and the Puranas. He defended the doctrine of Pantheism and the system of idolatry. Following out his pantheistic notions, he said that if a man loved money much he might

worship it, for money was part of God." Occasionally, when known to be in a village, they would be invited to some house for the purpose of being questioned about Christianity. The questions did not always imply a high respect for that religion or its professors, as may be seen from the following entry:—"In the morning we were conducted to a learned pandit, who was so anxious to see and speak to us that, before our going to him, he had spread a coarse country-blanket for us. He received us very politely, and had us seated on the blanket close by him. He said he had wanted very much to ask us a question, if it did not offend us. It was this: He considered the human mind to be influenced by motives in all its actions. He thought that many people had become Christians from different motives: some to obtain riches; others to get good food and clothing; and others still to be free from the great burden, as they supposed, of supporting their fathers and mothers in their old age. Now he wanted to know which of these motives had actuated us to forsake the old religion of our forefathers, and to become Christians. We said that none of these motives had actuated us to become Christians, but that a thorough, firm, and enlightened conviction of the human origin and fallacy of the Hindu religion, and of the divine origin and truth of the Christian religion, was the only reason of our forsaking the former and embracing the latter." The mode in which the question was put was certainly offensive, but Mr. Day evidently did not consider that any insult was intended. To regulate one's conduct in religious matters, not by one's own belief, but by the belief of others for the sake of the loaves and fishes to be gained thereby, was not a thing unknown to him, as the candid

avowal of a Hindu priest, narrated on another page of his Journal, shows. This priest had been arguing with Mr. Day against the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ. "When questioned whether he believed in the nine incarnations of Vishnu, one of the principal gods of the Hindus, he replied in the negative. We then, appealing to his conscience and the consciences of those sitting around, whose priest he was, asked how with this belief he consistently worshipped every day the Hindu gods. He said in reply that as a tailor or a barber subsists by sewing clothes or shaving, so he procured his livelihood by worshipping the Hindu gods in the houses of rich people, although he did not believe in them. When told that his profession was very inconsistent with his views, and was more dishonourable than that of a pickpocket, he maintained that it was necessary for him for his personal subsistence to behave worse than a pickpocket, for he did not like to be employed in any business that required labour." Let it not be supposed, however, that Mr. Day looked upon Hindu priests generally as resembling this "weak, inconsistent being," as he termed him.

Occasionally the reception given to the catechists was by no means friendly. The passage in which Mr. Day narrates the rude treatment they were subjected to in a village that lay in their way from Burdwan to Culna, is worth repeating for the sake of the pleasant picture it presents of the kindly old Hindu gentleman, whose veneration for the sacred rights of hospitality lifted him above all difference of creed.

"Towards sunset we entered the village, when some persons, respectable in their appearance, who were

sitting in a public place, inquired who we were. We told them we were Christians and wanted to put up at the place for the night, on which one of them rose up as furiously as a tiger for his prey, and in a loud contemptuous tone, bawled out: 'Away, away, ye Christians! Go away from this village. No Christian shall be allowed to pollute it by living in it. Cursed be Christianity, cursed be those who teach it, cursed be those who learn it, and cursed be those that become Christians! Away, away, no place for Christians in this village!' We were not at all unprepared for this outburst of passion against us. In fact this is what we expected in every village. Without speaking to them one word, we came near the end of the village. As we walked, we remembered the similar treatment our blessed Lord once received in a village in the evening. The thought occurred to us, 'Is the servant greater than his master, the slave than his lord.' We had well-nigh left the village, when a kind-hearted young man, known to some of us, from a distance called one of us by name and asked us to stop, which we did. He came up to us and told us not to mind the rough way in which we had been treated by some rude fellows, as he described them, and took us to a bungalow in the most sequestered part of the village. The interior of the bungalow was too filthy to be occupied, so we stopped outside and made the best of it. The young man caused some food to be brought us. We lighted our earthen lamp, spread out our blanket, and sat musing on the events of the day. On the kind-hearted young man leaving us for a time, we were surrounded by a company of young men, with whom we conversed on religion. One of them, with a



large club in his hand, spoke very rudely. Meanwhile the young man that had spoken kindly to us had gone home and prevailed on his father to keep us for the night in his house, for the place in which we were sitting was anything but comfortable. By his directions we were taken to his house, where we were respectfully welcomed. The old father came forward and said it did not much concern him whether we were Christians or Hindus, only he felt it to be his duty to be hospitable to all sorts of strangers. 'It is part of our family religion,' said he, 'to be hospitable to strangers. Sit down, take your ease, sup on what we are able to give you, and sleep in yon upper room.' We expressed our thankfulness to him. We then were made to sup on chapati, curry, milk, and some native cakes. We were then shown into an upper room nicely spread with carpet, when, after reading the Scriptures and worshipping our Heavenly Father, we addressed ourselves to sleep."

But even when courteously received, there was always some restraint to free intercourse, imposed by the rigid rules of caste upon Hindu hospitality to Christians. Smoking the hooka, for instance, was an invariable accompaniment to discussions on religion; but the strict Hindu was not permitted to enjoy this luxury in his ordinary way if Christians were present, as we gather from the following note. A Hindu gentleman had kindly entertained them to supper, and after this meal nearly a score of men assembled and seated themselves in the room. "We there explained in brief terms," he states in his Journal, "the sum and substance of Christianity, and expounded fully the cardinal doctrine of justification by faith. We sat on the same mat with them. It is reckoned

an abomination to smoke with the hooka filled with water while sitting on the same mat with Mohammedans, Christians, or low-caste Hindus. Accordingly the Babu and all his people in the room smoked in hookas emptied of water. They ever and anon offered us some of their tobacco, which we accepted and smoked in our own hooka filled with water." On another occasion Mr. Day notes that "certain Brahmins were very much amused at the novel spectacle of Christians eating rice in a Brahmin's house"; and then he adds: "We mention these apparently trifling facts because they demonstrate the tottering state of Brahminism and the whole system of Hinduism; for even to touch a Christian would by an orthodox Hindu be reckoned an abomination." Education and toleration were going hand in hand. Here is the last scene he describes in his Journals of his early preaching tours.

"At S—— I had a conference of an hour's length with some Brahmins and physicians. The principal topics of the conversation were the character of the Hindu gods, especially Krishna, whose followers they were, the Vedantic Monotheism, or rather Pantheism, and the character of Christ. To their credit, be it told, the discussion was carried on with the utmost calmness. But their placidity was disturbed by the entrance of a rude, blustering vain youth, who first taunted the learned company with polluting themselves in speaking to an apostate from Hinduism as I was, and then poured upon me a volley of the most insulting and abusive epithets, and advanced towards me with a stick to strike me. I sat perfectly unmoved. But it was too much for the Brahmins to bear; they took him by the neck and forcibly ejected

him, and declared that so long as the Christian was in their house, not even the slightest insult would be suffered to be paid him."

Among the names Mr. Day noted down in his "Journals" appears that of an old man, Govinda Samanta, whom he describes as an interesting person who had no faith in the Hindu Shastras, but had imbibed many Christian sentiments, and was consequently looked askance upon by his Brahmin neighbours. He was over sixty years of age, and so lame that he could with difficulty walk with a stick. He was well acquainted with L.—, Mr. Day's companion on his tour, and came to visit the catechists on their arrival in his village, which lay some miles from Burdwan. They had long conversations, and had good reason to suppose that he would soon profess Christianity. But on returning to the village a year after, "we were grieved," he states, "to see that instead of making progress in the knowledge of divine truth, he had evidently gone backwards. He had read little or nothing of the New Testament since our last visit, which circumstance he attributed to the providential visitation of sickness. We admonished him, and after urging him to pray to God through Jesus, we took leave of him." Though this old man bears little, or at most but a shadow of resemblance to the Govinda Samanta in the *Tale of Bengal Peasant Life* composed twenty years after, it does not seem improbable that Mr. Day had him in mind when he selected the title for that novel. At anyrate, this old man strongly attracted his sympathy, for concerning no other Hindu did he jot down so much as he did of him.

• In 1849, when Dr. Duff was arranging to return to Scotland for a season, Mr. Day addressed a letter to

him, expressing a wish to accompany him. Part of his letter thus states his reasons for making the proposal:—

“DEAR SIR,—You are about to leave India for a season, and depart to your fatherland; it strikes me that you could, if you chose, take me along with you. I know not in what manner this could be done; I have no experience in this matter, so I could not tell how to go about it. But I have an impression that it is *possible* and practicable with you, especially when I remember that Dr. Wilson of Bombay took Dhangibhai with him.

“As to the desirableness of this step as regards myself there can be but one opinion. It is not the gratification of an idle curiosity to see new men and things. The completion of my theological studies in the New College (Edinburgh) is, I may say, the sole motive in making this proposal. The sublime spectacle of what a noble Christian nation is doing for the promotion of the Lord’s glory, cannot also fail at the same time to prepare me for the same work in my hapless fatherland. But perhaps it will be asked, ‘Is it proper to leave the Lord’s work here and go to a foreign land?’ To this I have no hesitation in answering that I have not yet entered into my work. I am only preparing to enter upon it; and I hope, through God’s blessing, to enter on it with the intensest enthusiasm of my heart. So that by going to Scotland for a season I shall be only preparing in a nobler, grander, and better manner. As far as I am concerned, I am ready to bear with all manner of privations in order to the accomplishment of this object.—Yours, very affectionately,

“LAL BEHARI DAY.”

Dr. Duff did not, however, see his way to accede to his proposal, and he therefore continued his work in the mission along with his two fellow-catechists till all three were ordained together. Soon after that event there emerged a question which gave rise to some conflict of opinion between the European and the recently ordained native missionaries. The point in dispute was reserved for Dr. Duff to settle on his return to India in 1856.

To rake up old controversies is as undesirable as it is usually unprofitable, and this dispute is referred to only in so far as a concise summary of Mr. Day's account of it serves to illustrate his firmness of character. The newly ordained native missionaries had expected, in accordance with the principle of Presbyterian parity, to be placed, after their ordination, on a footing of equality with the European missionaries, at least in so far as their ecclesiastical status in the mission was concerned. Now the management of the mission was at that time under the control of the Mission Council, which directed not only the affairs of the Institution in Calcutta, but also those of the branch stations. This Mission Council was composed of all the missionaries, but none of the three newly ordained native missionaries were made members. Dr. Mackay, who was temporarily at the head of the Mission, sympathised with their views, but would take no step in the matter till Dr. Duff's return. Dr. Duff proved to be strongly opposed to their being admitted members. The three then drew up a memorial to be transmitted to the Foreign Mission Committee in Edinburgh, a proceeding which so far provoked Dr. Duff's indignation that he stigmatised Mr. Day as the "Ringleader of the Cabal." The two

others becoming frightened, yielded to Dr. Duff, but Mr. Day, being of sterner stuff, manfully stuck to his position, and threatened to leave the mission. Eventually a compromise was reached, and Mr. Day agreed to stay on for a year. It was arranged that he should take charge of the Culna Mission, where he was to have a free hand. Dr. Duff, true to his word, supported him in every plan he proposed with regard to the Culna Mission, sending him whatever money he wanted for improvements.

Mr. Day's early struggles had taught him how to measure his own strength, and at the same time had developed his self-reliance. At the time of his conversion, as we have seen, he refused, even when he had practically discarded his early religion, to be hurried into a public profession of Christianity until he had weighed the matter carefully in his mind and become fully convinced of the truth of its doctrines. So in this question of missionary status he declined to be convinced against his own convictions. With his great respect, not to say veneration, for his spiritual fathers, the necessity of calling in question their decision and refusing to bow to it, must have been one of the most unpleasant episodes in his life; but he was fighting, as he conceived, not for himself, but for the position of the native missionary, and to have weakly yielded would have been a betrayal of trust. It is pleasing to think that his independence and his conscientious adherence to what he considered right, instead of lowering, appears to have raised him higher in Dr. Duff's esteem. A few years after, on Mr. Day's landing with his young bride at Calcutta, the Doctor entertained them as his guests at his house for several days, a favour that he never extended to any other

native missionary. Mr. Day, on finding his position at Culna made comfortable and thoroughly independent, continued to superintend the mission work at that station for four years, instead of one as had been first agreed upon. He was then transferred, upon Dr. Ewart's death, to the pastorate of the Native Presbyterian Free Church in Cornwallis Square, Calcutta,—a position entirely independent of the Mission Council,—in which sphere he laboured for seven years (1860–67).

During the earlier part of his superintendence of the Culna Mission, Mr. Day was kept busily employed in putting the school connected with it on a better footing. The classes were rearranged, the services of more efficient teachers secured, the old buildings improved, and new ones erected. With hearty energy he laboured to make his Mission Station a centre for the spread of education and the dissemination of Christianity. From several letters preserved from among those he wrote to Dr. Duff, at this time, we select one as the best means of conveying an idea of the matters that closely occupied his time and attention.

“CULNA, 10th July 1857.

“MY DEAR SIR,—Your excellent letter of the 29th ult., enclosing the second half of the ten-rupee note from Gya, was duly received; I am only sorry that I am so late in replying to it. Many thanks for sanctioning the repairs of the bungalow and the expenses of getting up a gallery. Besides the Rs.100 which you so kindly directed Mr. P—— to send, I shall require more money immediately, as the repairs of the bungalow will be completed shortly, and the wood for the entire gallery must be bought at once. You may

rest assured that the workmen will be constantly superintended by me, and that I shall endeavour to the utmost of my power to make the work as cheap, and at the same time as substantial, as possible. A chapel at Culna similar to the one we have at Treveni, will do admirably. I regret, however, that I have not yet succeeded in getting a proper site. The piece of ground which I think is admirably suited to the end we have in view, lies immediately to the north of our present chapel—different from the piece of ground of which I wrote to you in a previous letter. This new piece of ground belongs to the Maharajah of Burdwan, to whose manager of affairs in this town I wrote on the subject, requesting him to give us the ground (about two cottahs in area) on a perpetual lease. He referred me to another officer of the Maharajah, who happens now to be at Burdwan. I shall very likely have to write to the Maharajah himself direct.

“I am glad to hear that you are thinking of a grant-in-aid for Culna. I should like to have it for two reasons: first, it would put into our hands funds for making the schools more efficient than they are now; and secondly, it would, whether justly or not, enhance in the eyes of the people the reputation of the schools, because connected with the Government, in which case we might have a larger number of boys than at present. About the tuition-fees which the boys have already begun to pay, I shall write to you in my next. Kailas and Barada have already joined me. They came here on the 1st of this month. Their coming will make no addition to the expenses here, as the sum total of the salary of K. C. M., now gone to Calcutta, and the salaries of the discharged



teacher and the pandit is exactly equal to the sum of the salaries of Kailas and Barada. I am thankful they have come, as I have been greatly relieved from my duties in the schools, both English and vernacular, and possess ample leisure for preaching the gospel to the people. Praying that the Lord will give you health and strength to enable you to do as much good to my native land as ever.—Yours affectionately,

“LAL BEHARI DAY.”

The events happening in Northern India at this time must have keenly interested him, and one would imagine that he must have felt some anxiety over them, yet he hardly alluded to them in his letters, which mostly discuss and give an account of his plans and arrangements for successfully prosecuting the work of the mission. In reading them one is hardly aware that the Mutiny, which swept over the country like a hurricane, was raging, except from occasional complaints of his letters being delayed in transmission by the Post Office. Among a number of letters of which he retained copies, only two have direct reference to that terrible time of suspense. One of these is an application to the District Magistrate, in conformity with a recent Act, for a licence to keep an old gun and two pistols on the mission premises for the purpose of self-defence. It runs as follows :—

“TO THE MAGISTRATE OF BURDWAN.

“CULNA MISSION SCHOOL, 25th September 1857.

“SIR,—Agreeably to Act XXVIII. of 1857, I have the honour to inform you that I have in my possession an old musket which I once used for shooting,

and which is now lying with me only as a piece of furniture, and that my assistants, Babus K. C. Ghose and B. P. Chuckerbutty, living with me on the mission premises, have each a pistol for self-defence; and I further beg that I as well as my assistants be furnished, agreeably to the provisions of the said Act, with licences to keep and use the said arms for the purposes specified.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your humble and obedient servant,

“LAL BEHARI DAY,  
“Free Church Missionary.”

The position in which native converts stood in those troublous times was a very trying one. If they fell into the hands of the mutineers they received but short shrift, and yet they could not altogether extinguish in their hearts every feeling of sympathy for the people of the land of their birth, however much they might disapprove of their actions. His second letter, of quite other import from the foregoing, was addressed to a co-presbyter in Calcutta, and, from the counsel, it contains, reflects sentiments worthy of a minister of that gospel, the burden of whose message was peace and goodwill to men. It shows Mr. Day's idea of the duties of a Christian minister when men's angry passions are roused:—

“CULNA, 22nd September 1857.

“MY DEAR MR. POWIE,—Though not personally, yet I hope I shall be spiritually, present with you all when you meet together as a Presbytery on Thursday next. The subjects which will then engage the earnest attention and prayerful deliberation of the Court are of very great importance. Whatever may

be the causes of the terrible convulsions transpiring in the midst of us, they are to us all abundant reasons for humiliation and searchings of heart; and I for one would gladly accept the invitation of the Government and observe the day of appointment.

"I should like," he goes on to say, "if the person or persons to whom was intrusted the spiritual oversight of the soldiers connected with our Church who may be expected soon to arrive in this country, made it a point to impress upon them the lesson of Christian forbearance and mercifulness, as I am afraid the 'army of vengeance,' as it has been already called in the public prints, may, in direct contravention to the spirit of our holy faith, give vent to the savage passions of the unsanctified heart. The Lord direct you in all your deliberations.—Yours very sincerely,

"LAL BEHARI DAY."

But a matter of a more purely personal kind was now beginning to engage his serious attention. A few days after the above letter, he is writing to a friend in Bombay, asking for confidential information respecting the religious character and mental accomplishments of a certain young lady there, whose name had been mentioned in a book on missions which had fallen into his hands. He had already been in communication with her father, the Rev. Hormazdji Pestonji, a Parsee by birth, but who, under Dr. Wilson's teaching, had been converted to Christianity. His letter touching on the somewhat delicate commission he intrusts to his friend is hardly one to be found in the everyday annals of courtship. As it supplies a clue to what he prized most highly in life—not wealth, but piety and intelligence—it should

not be omitted here. If the method he adopts does not precisely square with ordinary English notions on this subject, still we cannot help thinking that if the same judicious care and foresight were exercised by all those about to marry, less would be heard of marriage being a failure:—

“TO THE REV. D. NOAROJI, BOMBAY.

“CULNA, 25th September 1857.

“MY DEAR DHANGIBHAI,—It is after a long—a very long—time that I take up my pen to write to you. The peculiar circumstances under which I have been placed of late, and the distraction of mind to which they gave birth—an inkling of all which you may have had from Mr. Hormazdji, prevented me from writing to you, and even now I write to you only on private business.

“I suppose you know that I have been corresponding with Mr. Hormazdji Pestonji on a very interesting subject. As you must be quite intimate with him and his family, I shall thank you for giving me some information concerning them, or rather concerning a young lady of that family—Miss Hormazdji. I will put no questions, but you will have my best thanks for giving me detailed accounts of that young lady—her religious character, mental accomplishments, etc. The fuller you write the better. I hope to be pardoned for troubling you with this business, as you are the only common friend of the parties interested in the matter. It is possible you may see me at Bombay sometime next cold weather.—Believe me, my dear Mr. Dhangibhai, yours very sincerely, •

“LAL BEHARI DAY.”

A visit in person to Surat, where the young lady was then residing, had been suggested by her father, but Mr. Day did not possess the means of defraying the expenses of so long a journey—at that time all the more difficult from the disturbed state of the country. The following letter of a few weeks earlier date refers to matters editorial, matrimonial, and educational:—

“TO M. WYLIE, ESQ.

“CULNA, 8th September 1857.

“MY DEAR SIR,—Had I not been unwell, I would have made earlier acknowledgment of your kind note of the 28th ult., and of the papers which it enclosed. I have looked into the articles of S. C., and think highly of them so far as the subject-matter is concerned, though they possess all the usual defects of the excellent writer's style, namely, a certain inaccuracy and diffuseness of expression. I shall try and publish them in the *Arunadaya*” (a vernacular newspaper he was then editing), “though I cannot promise to give them early insertion, as I have a variety of useful and instructive articles in my box. By the way, in connection with the *Arunadaya*, I regret to inform you that the woodcut representing the first appearance of the dawn, at the head of the paper, has been broken into pieces by the printers, and as the gentleman (Mr Fowler of the Industrial School) who did it is dead, I am afraid it cannot be replaced. The paper must for some time appear without a pictorial heading until I can procure a suitable one in its room.

“I have to thank you for the many expressions of kindness contained in your letter, and shall always

feel it a pleasure to have the benefit of your counsel.

"The thought of settling down in life has lately been engaging my attention. Though I have pecuniary obligations to a certain extent, as you are well aware, I entertain the hope that by a little economy (and Mofussil living is much cheaper than living in Calcutta) and a little industry I shall be able at no distant date to be entirely free. I have been corresponding with the Rev. Hormazdji Pestonji of Surat, who has a grown-up daughter mentioned by Mrs. Colin Mackenzie in her book, *The Mission, Camp, etc.* Mr. Hormazdji, in his last letter, which I received the other day, urges me to make no delay in going to Surat. But of course you know the difficulties which a man in my circumstances has to contend with before he can undertake such a distant journey. Before I left Calcutta I spoke of this correspondence to my excellent friend, the Rev. T. Smith, and he kindly offered to do whatever lay in his power to forward my desires. I have accordingly written to him, after receiving the letter alluded to from Surat. I have also asked Mr. Smith to speak of the matter to you, confidently believing that you would take a lively interest in it.

"The girls' school, which I opened here since I came up, continues to prosper. There are the names of forty-five girls on the roll. Besides the pay of the teachers, there are other unavoidable expenses connected with the girls' school. Could not Mrs. Wylie and one or two of her lady friends kindly send me a donation of ten to fifteen rupees for meeting these expenses? With kindest regards to yourself and Mrs. Wylie.—Yours affectionately, LAL BEHARI DAY."

Though some of his missionary fathers doubted the expediency of his going so far afield for a spouse, the proposal met with the hearty approval of Dr. Duff. The result fully justified his choice, and he realised his brightest expectations, for Miss Hormazdji proved a faithful, loving wife and sympathetic helpmate to him throughout his wedded life. But this is anticipating, for the marriage did not take place till nearly three years later, and in the interval it had almost fallen through from an unforeseen accident breaking off all communication between the parties. At the close of 1857 Mr. Day was willing and ready to start on his journey to Surat, could he only have raised Rs.1300 to meet his travelling and other expenses, but this he did not succeed in doing, and he wrote as follows to Mr. Hormazdji, explaining the reason of his failure to comply with that gentleman's wishes:—

“TO THE REV. HORMAZDJI PESTONJI.

“ 25th October 1857.

“MY DEAR SIR,—Immediately after writing my last letter to you, I went down to Calcutta, partly to see my friend Rev. G. N. Nundy, who is there now, and partly to find out how far my friends would assist me in going to Surat as they had promised. The result, I am sorry beyond expression to say, is not at all what I expected. I shall tell you the whole story in its entirety. I find that a voyage to Surat and back again to Calcutta, after accomplishing the end in view, cannot cost less than Rs.1300. My friends now say that it is impracticable, in the present circumstances of the country, to assist me with that sum. And I have not got it myself. I see, therefore, no

chance of going to you now. I deem it my duty to make this fact known to you by the earliest opportunity. You have been since our correspondence exceedingly kind to me; and I had fondly hoped to go to Surat, but at present there are insuperable difficulties in my way. I cannot reasonably request the party to wait—and I don't dream of such a favour. The state of my feelings absolutely prevents me from writing any longer at present. The Lord bless you and yours.—Yours unworthily,

“ L. B. DAY.

“ *P.S.*—As in consequence of the irregularity of the Post Office, it is impossible to say whether letters reach their destination, I shall thank you for sending me a line of acknowledgment.”

His fears regarding the Post Office were far from being groundless, as the sequel proved. A short time after this, some important letters passing between Mr. Day and Mr. Hormazdji unfortunately went astray, through the unsettled condition of the country, which rendered the delivery of letters uncertain. This led to a temporary misunderstanding on both sides. Mr. Day concluded from the abrupt break in their correspondence that Miss Hormazdji had decided to marry some other aspirant for her hand, while she on her part came to a like conclusion with reference to him, supposing that he had married some other lady. In 1859, some two years after all correspondence had ceased, Mr. Day delivered an address entitled “Searchings of Heart,” which gave rise to much discussion and variety of opinion, especially in missionary circles. Mr. Day sent a copy of this address to Mr. Hormazdji, who wrote him a letter in reply, thanking



him for sending it, and also at the same time took the opportunity of inquiring into the cause of his silence. Explanations followed, and, pecuniary difficulties now no longer standing in his way, Mr. Day within a few months found himself in Bombay, and Miss Hormazdji favouring his suit, their marriage was duly celebrated soon after his arrival there.

In the meantime, while his marriage project was in abeyance, he applied himself with undiminished energy to furthering the progress and carrying out the work of the Mission at Culna, where matters did not always run smoothly. Early in 1858 we find him writing to the Magistrate of Hooghly on a subject that frequently gave Christian missionaries no little trouble and annoyance. The letter speaks for itself.

“TO HODGSON PRATT, ESQ., OFFICIATING MAGISTRATE,  
HOOGHLY.

“CULNA, 28th March 1858.

“MY DEAR SIR,—I have just now heard, whether true or false I cannot tell, that certain inhabitants of Guptapara in the Zillah of Hooghly, have gone to your Court to lodge a complaint against me. I think it therefore proper to send you a statement of the case.

“You will perceive from the copy of the Culna Mission Report, which I send you by this day's post, that in October last year I established a Mission School at Guptapara, which was in a great measure supported by some of the respectable inhabitants of the village. Last Monday, however, owing to reasons known to themselves, they took the school into their own hands and broke off all connection with the Free

Church Mission. That very evening a lad of the first class of the Guptapara School, of the name of N. C. Raya, about fifteen years of age, came to me at the Culna Mission House, declared his conviction of the truth of Christianity, and expressed a desire to live with me with a view to be admitted into the Church of Christ by the rite of baptism. I thought it my duty to keep him and to give him further instruction in the Christian religion. The father of the lad came next morning to the mission house and used all manner of arguments to induce him to go back with him—but in vain. He had declared his unwillingness to go to his father, and his firm resolution to embrace the Christian religion. The father then petitioned the Darogah, the Moonshiff, and Mr. Sawers, the Assistant Magistrate, all which petitions have been sent to Mr. Lawford, the Magistrate of Burdwan. The father also, I hear, has gone personally to Burdwan to lodge a complaint against me before the Magistrate. I have thought it proper to lay these facts before you, as parties may go to your Court and lodge a complaint against me.—Believe me, my dear sir, yours affectionately,

• “LAL BEHARI DAY.”

Disputes of a similar description were ever and anon cropping up, requiring tact, patience, forbearance, and firmness on his part in dealing with them. The demands which the affairs of the mission made on his time and attention more than likely helped him to bear and forget his disappointment at receiving no news from Bombay. Whatever spare moments he had, he diligently devoted to literary work, which must have further tended to divert his mind from

unpleasant reflections. Notwithstanding the opposition of a section of the inhabitants in Culna and adjacent villages, he succeeded in bringing the mission into a flourishing condition, as shown by the report he transmitted to Dr. Duff. Here is his summary of that report:—"Statistics of the Free Church Mission at Culna for the year 1858: Ordained Native Missionaries, 1; Christian Native Teachers, 3; Scripture Readers, 3; Boys on the School-Roll in Anglo-Vernacular side, 112; in Vernacular side, 276; Girls, 95; Baptisms, 4 adults during the year." The work of the mission, he added in a note, was conducted on the lines of other mission stations: dividing itself into two<sup>c</sup> departments—the directly evangelistic, and the educational.

The receipt of a letter from Mr. Hormazdji, which led to explanations and the removal of misapprehensions on both sides, cleared the way for Mr. Day to reopen negotiations with him for the hand of his daughter in marriage. The cost of a journey to Surat was happily now no longer an insuperable obstacle to him, and it was arranged that he should travel thither for his bride. Starting from Calcutta about the middle of October 1859, he made his way across India to Bombay, visiting *en route* Benares, Allahabad, Cawnpore, Agra, and Gwalior. In the last week of November he reached Surat, where he was duly married to Miss Hormazdji on the 2nd of January. It was arranged that he and his bride should travel to Calcutta by sea, and after a few weeks' stay in Bombay, they went on board a steamer bound for that port. The vessel proved a slow one, and they had to spend seven tedious weeks at sea before they set foot in Bengal. His diary, which he

kept of his journey both overland and by sea, contains nothing noteworthy, nothing which would indicate that he had an eye that could penetrate beneath the surface of things, or that he possessed any unusual descriptive powers. His entries chiefly refer to the number of native Christians in the various places at which he halted, and generally conclude with an expression of regret that there were so few. Of the inhabitants of the North-West he remarks: "The people are martial. They love riding much. I never saw in any city (Agra) so many people riding on horseback, on elephants, on camels." But he further remarks that "the Bengalis were far ahead of them in civilisation, and wherever intellect was required, there he was sure to find a Bengali." On leaving Allahabad, he had as a fellow-traveller the son of the Dewan of a native prince on his way to a Durbar. This man was hideously fat, being in shape like a big-bellied jar, and wore round his neck "a chain of gold which must have weighed several pounds." He does not exactly say that he considered this a sign of backward civilisation, but he seems to imply as much. The entries in the later part of his diary on board ship dwindle down to merely noting the daily longitude and latitude.

A cordial reception awaited Mr. and Mrs. Day in Calcutta, where they enjoyed the hospitality of his old friends belonging to the mission for a brief season, before he proceeded to Culna to resume his duties. He then returned to his work of superintending the mission at that station. A few months afterwards an event occurred which quite changed his plans. By the death of Dr. Ewart, the pastorate of the church in Cornwallis Square, Calcutta, had become

vacant, and Mr. Day was asked to accept this charge. From the very first he had his doubts as to whether the pastorate of this church would be a post altogether congenial to his mind, doubts which experience in some degree verified. For one thing, he was too much of a student to give up the most of his time to the numerous petty matters ever cropping up in such a congregation, of which students formed a considerable proportion. Not a few of these were conceited and impatient of spiritual control or advice; and if they contributed a trifle to the funds of the church, they seemed to think that in return for this they had a claim upon the minister's entire time, attention, and leisure hours. Dr. Duff's earnest entreaties, however, overcame his hesitation, and he removed to Calcutta. For seven years he continued to minister to the native congregation that assembled in the Church in Cornwallis Square. Though Mr. Day hesitated in accepting the call, and he afterwards found much that was irksome in the position, he laboured assiduously, and never failed in conscientiously and acceptably performing his duties towards his congregation; when the time came to bid them farewell, they were as sorry to part with him as he was to leave them.

While at Cornwallis Square his name became familiar to a wider circle outside the limits of his church through some lectures which he delivered upon that religious movement of reform among the educated Hindus of Calcutta, known as the Brahma Samaj, to which we have already referred. Its guiding spirit at the time was the famous Babu Keshab Chander Sen, whose eloquence and energy in propagating his opinions were powerful enough to attract

the attention of many who ordinarily concerned themselves but little with religious questions. Of this movement Mr. Day was not an indifferent spectator. As the minister of a Christian congregation composed largely of converts from Hinduism, he was brought in close touch with it. In so far as Brahmaism sought to purify Hinduism of its grosser forms of superstition and idolatry, he sympathised with it, but as a substitute for Christianity its teachings called for his strongest opposition. As a watchman on the walls of Zion, he felt bound to raise his warning voice against its doctrines. His vigorous exposure of its errors in his first two lectures was so far misunderstood as to lead him to complain in a later lecture that somehow or other he had been represented by parties as an enemy of the Brahmas. The charge was groundless, since nobody was readier than he to acknowledge the value of the reforms the Brahmas were trying to effect, though he put no value on Brahmaism as a system of religion. In the following passage he clearly defined his attitude towards it. His words were: "I value Brahmaism for three reasons. I value it as a protest against idolatry, which is the crying sin of our nation. Whatever defects the Brahmas have, they are not mere speculative monotheists; they have energetically protested against idolatry, and are endeavouring honestly, I believe, to rescue their countrymen from its irrational and degrading practice. I value Brahmaism as an instrument of social reform in our country. It has begun to emancipate Hindu women from the thralldom of ignorance and tyrant custom; and it is undermining that huge system of caste which presents the greatest barrier to all improvement. And I value Brahmaism as an index of that spirit of

religious inquiry which has begun to manifest itself in some of our educated countrymen. But having thus expressed my sense of the value of Brahmaism, I feel bound to declare that it is a very defective system of religion, that it is not adapted to the condition of man, that it is incapable of giving everlasting happiness to its votaries, and that, therefore, as a system of religion, it is of no use."

Our brief outline of Mr. Day's missionary and pastoral work will fitly close with a short statement of some of his reasons for withdrawing from the pastorate of the native congregation of the Free Church in Calcutta. These were almost entirely pecuniary. His income from all sources, including what he received from an almost annual examinership for Bengali and Sanskrit in the university, amounted to only Rs.150 a month, besides a damp manse in which he lived rent-free. With an increasing family, he found it no easy matter to make ends meet. In order to increase his income he proposed to Mr. Duff an arrangement by which he could have added Rs.100 a month by teaching in the Free Church Institution, but this the doctor steadily refused to accede to, rightly considering, no doubt, that the minister of a congregation ought not to be regularly employed in teaching. The death of three of his children in three consecutive years in the manse, moreover, impressed upon him the desirability of removing to some situation where his family might enjoy better health. Such were his chief reasons for leaving the company of his old friends in the Free Church, a parting that was sorely against his will. Though secular teaching was henceforth the business of his life, his heart was ever warm towards his old friends of the mission and

its work, and while performing his everyday duties as professor at Hooghly, he regularly conducted a service in English on Sunday. Nor would he drop the title of Reverend, even though the retention of it was supposed by some of his friends to stand in the way of his promotion in the Educational Service.



## CHAPTER IV

EDITOR AND AUTHOR

THE predilection of Mr. Day's mind decidedly lay in the direction of literature. But to preach the Gospel of Jesus to his fellow-countrymen, and to visit them in their homes, imparting to them the knowledge of its saving truth, were to him his first and highest duty; had it not been for this earnest sense of duty, his love of letters might sooner have asserted itself more strongly. Even in the Journals of his first preaching tours, he turns aside from the drier narration of religious discussions and preaching in the bazaars, to relate the pleasant legendary tale of the "Bagdi" kings, excusing himself for giving it a place in his pages on the ground that it had not been hitherto published. The story will bear repetition, and is worth reproducing as an early specimen of the style of the author of *Bengal Folk-Lore*. In his missionary rounds, he came to Vishnupur, where the contrast between the strength of the ancient ruins and the humble buildings of the modern village so impressed him as to lead him to tell the tale of the origin of the race of the "Bagdi" kings, whose capital it had been.

"Well-nigh twelve hundred years ago, a Hindu from the north-west of India was proceeding on a pilgrimage

to Puri along with his wife, who was soon to become a mother. As they came near to Vishnupur, his wife felt the throes of childbirth. Lodging in the cottage of a certain Bagdi (a very low caste), she gave birth to a son, whom they left in charge of the Bagdi, because of the burden of carrying the child along with them. They went to Puri, worshipped at the shrine of Juggernaut, and very soon after both died. The infant boy was carefully nurtured by the Bagdi and his wife. In the earliest years of his life the boy showed indications of a mind vastly superior to those around him. He gave proof of great physical courage, and was foremost in every daring exploit. Untaught to read, he sought to earn his living as a cowherd, in which capacity he was employed by a Brahmin residing in the same village as his foster-parent, the Bagdi. Of all the cowherds in the neighbourhood, he was the most active, and was much loved by his Brahmin master. One April day, when the sun was mounting in his fiery chariot towards the meridian, the herd-boy laid himself down to rest under the umbrageous foliage of a wide-spreading banian tree; but the ruler of the day pursued him thither. Through an opening in the branches of the tree, the sun darted down his burning shafts, and had aimed them at the face of the sleeping herd-boy. Fortune, no longer able to see her favourite child suffer in this manner, sent two milk-white cobras, which, with their circular hoods, offered a friendly shade to the loved face, already hot from the glowing furnace of the midday sun. Under the tree, the guardian serpents thus posed shield their charge. The Brahmin began to feel extremely anxious for his dear boy when the hour of his return had passed, and the other cow-

herds had returned home for their dinner without him. The glorious sun had climbed his greatest height, and was now declining apace. He knew the bold nature of his boy. He had heard of his rambling excursions in the jungle, and of his hairbreadth escapes. His mind was filled with troubled thoughts. He feared lest his brave boy had perished by the claws of a bear in the thicket, and he set out in search of Bir Hambir (for that was the cowherd's name). He winds through many a field and jungle, where each brought back to memory some daring feat of Bir Hambir; but all in vain. At last he finds his boy in rosy sleep under the protection of the two guardian serpents. He knew that to be under the protection and umbrella-like shade of two cobras was the surest sign of future royalty, and concluded in his mind that his herd-boy was destined to be a king. He called him by name, and just as Bir Hambir was awakening, the guardian serpents glided away into the thicket. The Brahmin, confident in his mind of the future greatness of his boy, asked him what he would make of his master if he one day became king. The future king laughed at this, thinking his master was joking. But he was seriously assured of his high destiny, and was told the circumstances of his life. Bir Hambir obtained a horse from his master. He gradually gathered around him a number of cowherds and other mean people, and made predatory raids into surrounding villages. In time he became chief of many hundreds and thousands, and founded the city of Vishnupur, of which he became king. Such is the story of the origin of the 'Bagdi' kings of Bengal."

When Mr. Day was appointed to the mission at Culna, after finishing his course of theological studies,

he found relaxation from the labour of teaching and preaching in composing essays on various subjects. These were among the first productions of his pen to pass through the press, and were published in a small volume. A copy of this he sent to the Rev. Mr. Hormazdji in 1857, before their communications regarding his proposed marriage with Miss Hormazdji were temporarily interrupted, and in a note to that gentleman he explains the circumstances under which these essays were written. He describes them as being "of a light character, for the most part having been written as what Professor Wilson would call 'literary recreations.'" And he adds: "By the way, most of those articles were written while I was at Culna on a former occasion. Now that I am at Culna again, I trust that my literary enthusiasm will return upon me with redoubled force. Ere long you will see me, I hope, again in the *Calcutta Review*, as the editor has already asked me to contribute. Your judicious distribution of copies of my printed letter to the Brahmists has given me huge satisfaction."

The editor of the *Calcutta Review* at that time was his old professor and friend, the Rev. Dr. T. Smith, who, early recognising his literary talents, did all in his power to encourage him to cultivate them. In all matters connected with literature it was to him that Mr. Day turned for advice. Here is one of his letters to him, of nearly the same date as his note to Mr. Hormazdji:—

"TO THE REV. T. SMITH.

"CULNA, 26th September 1857.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have been thinking for a long time of writing for the *Calcutta Review*, but am utterly

at a loss for a subject. Some subjects do indeed suggest themselves to my mind, but I know not whether you would like them. I have a paper nearly ready on the 'Life and Labours of Dr. Carey.' Would you care, if after perusal you thought it worthy, to put it in the *Review*. If you do, I can send it to you for the December number. It is but fair to state the *substance* of that paper was read by me at a Monthly Missionary Prayer-Meeting upwards of two years ago. Another paper, entitled 'Retrospect of English Education in Calcutta,' is also in a state approaching to completion. Would you mind to put *that* in? But perhaps the insertion of that paper would be deemed unnecessary by you, after the able article on a similar (if not the very same) subject from Dr. Mackay's pen in an old number of the *Review*. For many reasons I should like now and then to contribute to the *Review*. You know well what is in me. Will you, therefore, kindly suggest to me subjects on which I may write?

"In a letter dated the 7th inst., I wrote to you on my private affairs. I trust it was duly put into your hands. Owing to the holiday, our English, Vernacular Boys', and Vernacular Girls' Schools have been closed. They will be reopened on Monday week. With the blessing of the Lord, I am endeavouring to be as useful here as circumstances and my capacities permit. Trusting this will find you in perfect health.—Yours affectionately,

LAL BEHARI DAY."

With his quiet and less absorbing country life at Culna, his literary enthusiasm did return; but it rather directed itself to vigorously advocating reform, if not in the methods, at least in the spirit in which mission

work was conducted by some Europeans, than to pure literature written for recreation. A few months after writing the foregoing letter to Dr. Smith, he delivered at the United Monthly Missionary Prayer-Meeting held in Calcutta, and thereafter printed, an Address entitled *Searchings of Heart*. It came as a shock of surprise to his audience. His words of reproof were keenly canvassed, and gave rise to much diversity of opinion among those who took an active part in the work of Christian missions. The plain, outspoken terms with which he called attention to shortcomings amongst them made it unpleasant reading to many, and greatly pained some of his oldest and best friends, like Dr. Ewart. Though his statements were questioned, and his mode of putting them was disapproved by some, they were accepted as wholesome criticism by others, who heartily welcomed his suggestions, and commended them for their "downright honesty and Christian earnestness." To converts and laymen interested in missions he had a few words of advice to offer, but the main portion of his address was directed to missionaries, to whom he had, what he believed to be, some home-truths to tell. How far his allegations were true is not of much moment now, though the principle he laid down as an indispensable condition of successful missionary effort will always hold good. His admonitions were certainly not given in a spirit of fault-finding; they are the words of one who had the welfare of his countrymen thoroughly at heart. He spoke strongly, because he felt strongly. *Searchings of Heart* is still worth a perusal, were it only for its terse vigorous pleading, couched in simple, forcible language. One would have to search through a long

file of mission records before alighting on such another passage as the following :—"To assist self-examination on this point" (the want of cordiality between missionaries and converts, a state of things for which many missionaries were inclined to lay the whole blame on the converts, wrongly, as Mr. Day believed), "I would suggest that we, as missionaries, put to ourselves the following questions:—Do I sincerely love the converts, and am I really desirous of doing them good? As converts from heathenism of the blackest dye, they have their peculiar weaknesses,—do I make sufficient allowances for those weaknesses?—do I mourn over those weaknesses?—do I pray for divine grace, and adopt suitable measures for removing those weaknesses? When I hear of the faults of a convert, am I sure that I do not often draw from that single case the general inference that those faults must be shared by other converts? Do I look upon my converts, or converts in general of the mission to which I belong, as my sons in the faith—as brethren in Christ, and not as subordinates and servants? Am I sure that I am not aristocratic in my demeanour towards them, bearing myself loftily in their presence as a man of higher spiritual attainments and of a superior civilisation, issuing mandates to them with an air of authority, and not condescending to sit beside them and 'hold familiar converse delighted'? Am I sure that I am not a little too susceptible of flattery, looking upon a time-serving, cowardly hypocrite of a convert as a perfect saint, only because he chimes in with my opinions and humours my prejudices,—while denying the Christian name to one who dares have an opinion of his own, submits not to the mere *ipse dixit* of authority, and boldly acts according

to the dictates of his conscience and what he believes to be the injunctions of the Word of God? Do I exercise Christian charity towards the converts, not thinking evil of them—not hastily taking up an evil report against them, but putting at all times the most favourable construction on their words and actions? It would do our souls good were we to ask ourselves these and such like questions.”

Turning to the European Christian laymen, he continued: “Many of you, dear brethren, though brought by no spiritual considerations into this country, have always taken a lively interest in its missions; and some of you have been their staunchest advocates and most liberal supporters. But, brethren, do not take offence if I put you the question, ‘Can you not do more?’ I do not say this with regard to your pecuniary contributions. I am not one of those who think that the Christianity of a man is in direct ratio—sometimes, we know, it is an inverse ratio—with the magnitude of his monthly subscription or his yearly donation. I should like you to give more if you can; but I do not ask the question with that view. Can you do more in other higher and better respects? Can you not love the people of this land more than you have hitherto done? Can you look upon every Native as your brother? I fear some merely worldly Europeans beat hollow many of our pious and mission-subscribing laymen. They hold intercourse with the Hindus. I do not mean that you should, like them, humour the people in their follies, and partake of their worldly amusements. But what I mean is that a better acquaintance with the people and the cherishing of a more brotherly feeling towards them, are highly desirable.” Looking back in later years, Mr.



Day was inclined to admit that when he uttered these words, sharply reflecting on the bearing of European workers in the Christian missions towards the people of India, he had taken too gloomy a view of the situation, which he had painted in darker colours than the facts of the case altogether warranted. In fairness to all, it should be kept in mind that there still hung over the country the baleful shadow of the Mutiny, to which, as he was fully aware, was largely attributable this lack of sympathy which he deplored. "I am afraid," he went on to say in his address, "the late insurrection, the last billows of which are still breaking on the mountains of Central India and the plains of Oude, has thrown our missions considerably back, not merely by crippling the resources of the several missionary societies, but chiefly as regards the disposition of the people towards Christianity. Their hatred, in general, of Christianity is more intense than before, simply because they regard Christianity as the religion of the Europeans." Clearly there was little hope of Christianity being favourably received among self-respecting Hindus until the bitter feelings roused by recent events had given way to a better understanding between them and the missionaries; how soon that was to be reached depended much upon the conduct of the latter. How far Mr. Day's arguments contributed to hasten so desirable a change it is not easy to say. Considering the position which he held as a Native missionary, directly responsible to European missionaries, under whose supervision he carried on his work, the boldness of his language was somewhat unusual; but it was quite in harmony with his known independence of character, which he had formerly displayed in the stand he made against Dr.

Duff in defence of the status of Native missionaries of the Free Church of Scotland. Nothing that he had said disturbed the cordiality of the relations subsisting between him and those with whom he was most intimately associated in his own denomination. In truth, his address from beginning to end was a standing testimony to the intense earnestness with which he sought to win over his Hindu countrymen to the Christian faith. Hence his passionate desire to sweep away everything that would close their hearts against it.

In his *Govinda Samanta*, when describing the lively and noisy scene of a village market, he introduces a missionary, the Rev. Mr. Kleinknecht, who had taken advantage of the gathering to address a few words to the assembled people. As this gentleman was evidently the type of missionary that commended itself to Mr. Day, and approached in some measure his ideal, we give the portrait as he sketched it. "As Mr. Kleinknecht was very affable in his manners, and had no hauteur or arrogance in his demeanour towards the children of the soil; as he was exceedingly simple in his habits, like most Germans; as he never lost his temper in his discourses with Hindus, though it was sorely tried by the irrelevant arguments and incoherent reasonings of his opponents; as he sometimes gave medicines to the poor people of the village if sick at the time of his annual visit; and as he spoke the Bengali language almost like a Bengali (and Germans, as a rule, speak Bengali better than Englishmen), excepting now and then confounding his b's with his p's,—he was universally liked by the inhabitants of Kanchanpur; indeed, little boys used to go up to him, and,

catching his coat-tails, used to say, 'Padre Sahib, *Salâm.*'"

To some it may appear strange that in the only direct reference made in *Govinda Samanta* to mission work among the peasants, a German missionary should stand as the central figure. This may, however, be partly accounted for by the fact that the missionary best known to the inhabitants of the district where the scene of the story was laid was of that nationality. In so far his choice was a mere accident. From the manner in which he alluded to German missionaries in his *Searchings of Heart*, it is just possible he may have had another reason. He does not omit, however, to tell his readers that Mr. Kleinknecht was employed by the Church Missionary Society.

It might be inferring more than Mr. Day's words were intended to imply, to suppose that he did not confidently look forward to the speedy conversion of the Hindus of Bengal in large numbers to Christianity, but it may be fairly held that he was clearly of opinion that the missionary had abundant room for the exercise of much patience and hope before he would see much tangible result from his labours. Such, at least, is the interpretation one feels inclined to put upon the passage where he describes the narrow limits beyond which even a popular missionary failed to carry his peasant audience.

"Mr. Kleinknecht addressed the people, taking for his text, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' The reverend gentleman drew such a vivid picture of the sorrows and sufferings of humanity, and manifested such glowing sympathy for the labouring poor, that the audience

(the majority of whom were of that class) seemed to be greatly affected. While the preacher was going on with his subject with great earnestness and fluency, one here and another there exclaimed, 'All that the Padre Sahib is saying is quite true!' When, however, he touched on the last clause of the text, and spoke of eternal rest as the gift of the Saviour, he did not seem to carry along with him the sympathy of his audience. At the conclusion of the address a discussion followed."

To return to matters more distinctly literary. Journalism Mr. Day never took up as a profession, nor is there any ground for supposing that he ever thought of doing so. The one object which he kept steadfastly in sight, and which he had as much at heart when his faculties were failing him as when his powers were at their prime, was the improving and purifying of the social, moral, and religious life of the people among whom he was born and bred. He looked to the spread of Christianity as the regenerating force that would bring about such a reformation in morals and religion as he longed to see, but he also regarded education and the public press as valuable auxiliaries which, if rightly directed, would materially assist in furthering the same end. It was as a missionary, seeking to instruct the ignorant and enlighten those living in darkness, that he first seriously addressed himself to literature; his aim was to supplement his work of preaching and teaching in the class-room by means of his pen, a task all the more congenial to him because it gave fuller and freer scope to his literary tastes. The interval which elapsed between his first engagement at the Culna Mission and his return there as superintendent was

spent by him, as has been already noticed, in Calcutta. It was during this time that he commenced editing a vernacular paper, which was published under the title of *Arunadaya*. The editorship of this paper he had probably undertaken at the suggestion and by the advice of his "Missionary Fathers," certainly with the concurrence and approval of some of them, who desired to turn his literary talents into a channel where they might be of the greatest practical service to Christian missions. After being appointed head of the Culna Mission, he continued, as we have seen from his letter to Dr. Smith, to edit this paper, while carrying on at the same time his duties as superintendent. Before leaving Calcutta, he had thought of giving up his connection with the *Arunadaya*, gravely doubting whether Culna was not too distant for him to conduct it efficiently. We learn from the following passage in one of his letters to Dr. Duff that his fears were uncalled for:—

"As for the paper, *Arunadaya*, I am happy to say that I find no such difficulty in conducting it from this place, as I anticipated when I was in Calcutta. After all, Mr. Smith was quite right when he expressed himself so confidently as to the possibility of conducting the paper from Culna—his experience as an editor, of some periodical or other, I may say for the last seventeen years, having enabled him, no doubt, to become a better judge in the matter than other people. By the way, owing to the repeated solicitations of my Serampore printer, I went on Monday last to Hooghly to get the *Arunadaya* registered in the magistrate's Cutcherry. But I found there that I might well have spared the pains, the expenses, and the time, as the magistrate told me that I had nothing to do in

the matter, it being necessary for either the proprietor or the printer to appear in Court, make a deposition, and get a formal licence for the press." His connection with this paper was not of long duration, but brief though it proved, it was his first introduction to editorial duties.

Mr. Day, however, aimed at something more than merely conducting a newspaper in his mother-tongue. His experience already gained served not only to prepare him for, but at the same time to increase his desire to enter a wider field of journalism. It was not the pursuit of literary fame that spurred him on; still less the hope of pecuniary reward. To assist in the work of educating the people of India was looked upon by him as a sacred duty imposed upon him, which he conscientiously and assiduously endeavoured to perform. But this was not enough. He felt, and felt strongly, that many Europeans sojourning in India had much to learn regarding its people; that in many instances they seemed better acquainted with and more inclined to remember their vices than their virtues; and, in consequence of this attitude, Western ideas were less acceptable to the latter than they would have been had a better understanding and greater mutual respect for each other existed between them. Through the medium of the English language he could address, in addition to the better educated among his countrymen, that portion of the English-speaking world that took interest in Indian affairs. It can therefore be easily understood that he would readily accede to the proposal of Babu Sri Nath Day of Serampore, to undertake the editing of the *Indian Reformer*. This post he did not continue to hold long, his arrangement with that gentleman only last-

ing for little more than a year. He then took up the editorial duties of the *Friday Review*, with which he was connected for some time. This journalistic work added very little to his income, but his editorship of the *Friday Review* indirectly led to a great improvement in his pecuniary position by opening a way for him to enter Government service. In his eyes, his entrance into the Educational Service of the Government was an improvement financially only, for no position in life was more honourable than the calling of a Christian minister. How the door of Government service was thrown open to him through his connection with the *Friday Review* is easily explained. During the great famine in Orissa, the then Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Cecil Beadon, was severely taken to task by a portion of the press for not having adopted, as was alleged, proper measures to cope with that calamity. The *Friday Review* was one of the newspapers that warmly defended the course pursued by the Lieutenant-Governor. In return for the support thus accorded him, Sir Cecil Beadon, on retiring from office, recommended its editor to the Director of Public Instruction, who, in consequence of this recommendation, shortly afterwards offered Mr. Day the post of headmaster of Berhampore College. This post, after carefully considering the obligations he owed to his family, he decided to accept, and entered on his new sphere of duty in September 1867.

It is hardly necessary to say that, while Mr. Day highly appreciated and felt bound to accept the offer thus made to him, it was not without much mental struggle that he made up his mind to sever his connection with the Free Church Mission, to which he was sincerely attached, and with which so much of his

past life was identified. From his point of view, moreover, one who devoted his faculties and energies to teaching divine truths stood on a higher platform than the teacher of purely secular subjects, however great the pecuniary advantages the latter might possess. Had he had himself only to consider, there is little likelihood that he would have ever resigned the office of the ministry. How strongly he felt on this matter, and how closely the associations of that period of his life when engaged in pastoral work clung to him in later years, may be gathered from the following otherwise trifling incidents. When some of his friends in the Educational Department advised him to drop the title Reverend, as they believed it rather stood in the way of his promotion, he firmly declined to lay it aside, though he did not dispute the advantages that might accrue to him by following their advice. On a later occasion, when writing out the title-page of one of his books, it was hinted to him that it might help the sale of the work if he were to put after his name the letters, F.U.Cal., to indicate that he was a Fellow of the University of Calcutta. To this suggestion his reply was that that title, though he valued it highly, gave him but little pleasure compared with the title of Reverend conferred on him as a minister of the Free Church of Scotland, and this was said in a tone that prohibited all further discussion on the subject. But great though his reluctance was to break away from old associations and withdraw from active mission work, as the father of a young family dependent upon him, he was in duty bound to consult their interests and take whatever steps were likely to promote or improve their future prospects in life. The opportunity of



bettering his pecuniary position which presented itself was therefore not to be missed, since, by accepting the Headmastership of the College of Berhampore, his income was at once more than doubled, to say nothing of the clearer prospect of future preferment with a corresponding increase in salary.

When writing to Mr. Hormazdji, Mr. Day mentioned, as before noticed, the fact that he was an occasional contributor to the pages of the *Calcutta Review*. Of these contributions, the best known, perhaps, are his papers descriptive of "Bengali Games and Amusements," and of "Bengali Festivals and Holidays." Lively, graphic, picturesque descriptions they are, showing their writer to be a close observer of manners and customs. But he had a higher purpose before him than simply to convey information on these subjects. He never lost sight of their moral aspects, rightly judging that they were an index to a people's character, or, as he put it, "Games and Amusements are but exponents of the national character; when a change is effected on the latter, the former will alter of themselves." He further expressed the hope "that, with the progress of improvement and the diffusion of sound useful knowledge, the sports and recreations of the people of Bengal will be more polished and rational than they now are." One feature of these articles is here worth noting, because it runs through almost everything he wrote. We refer to his warm and undeviating sympathy with the toiling peasantry of his country. The remarks with which he begins his account of their simple rural sports might have been penned as an introduction to his *Govinda Samanta*, composed some twenty years later. "The ryots of Bengal," he wrote, "are as

interesting a class of people as any peasantry in the world. Amongst them is to be found a vast deal of the simplicity of olden times; and some of the social virtues which they exercise entitle them to our respect and admiration. But they have been greatly abused: systematic oppression from time immemorial has paralysed their energies, deprived them of their native manliness, and reduced them to the ignoble condition of slaves. Their own countrymen have proved to be their cruelest oppressors and most inveterate foes. The zemindar's *Katcheri* is the scene of the ryots' degradation, where he is derided, spat upon, and treated as if he were the veriest vermin in creation." No pen has been more effectively wielded than Mr. Day's to remove these blots.

For the simple, innocent recreations with which rustic toil lightened its hard lot, he had nothing but kindly words; amusements distinctly demoralising in their tendency he could not too severely denounce. The impure state of the Drama in Bengal, for instance, excited his keen disgust, to which he gave expression in the following sketch, where he is almost tempted to take up the satirist's lash:—"Of the execrable representations called *Jatras*, we dare not give here a detailed description; they are wretched from the commencement to the fifth act. The plots are often the amours of Krishna, or the love of *Bidya* and *Sundar*. In the representations of the Krishna-jatra, boys, arrayed in the habit of Sakhis and Gopinis (milk-maids), cut the principal figure on the stage. It would require the pencil of a master-painter to portray the killing beauty of these fairies of the Bengali stage. Their sooty complexion, their coal-black cheeks, their haggard eyes, their long-

extended arms, their gaping mouths, and their puerile attire, excite disgust. Their external deformity is rivalled by their discordant voices. For the screechings of the night-owls, the howlings of the jackals, and the barkings of dogs that bay the moon are harmony compared with their horrid yells. Their dances are in strict accordance with the other accessories. In the evolutions of the hands and feet, dignified with the name of dancing, they imitate all postures and gestures calculated to soil the mind and pollute the fancy. The principal actors during the interludes are a *mather*, who enters the stage with a broomstick in his hand, and cracks a few stupid jests, which set the audience in a roar of laughter; and his brother *Bhulua*, who, completely fuddled, amuses the spectators with the false steps of his feet." No one was more loyal to his country or more acutely sensitive regarding the reputation of its people than Mr. Day, and he never exposed puerilities or immoralities for the sake of merely ridiculing them; he ever made it clear that his one object was reform.

In his account of "Bengali Festivals and Holidays" the moral side naturally comes to the front more distinctly than in his description of their games and amusements. In describing these festivals, he has always a word of denunciation for open immoralities connected with them, but if these are absent, he confines himself to an undertone of compassionate pity towards the deluded votaries of superstition. The two articles deserve a better fate than to be buried in the pages of a magazine. Take, for instance, the following particularly interesting paragraph on snake worship:—

"It is not a little singular that the odious and

venomous race of serpents should ever become the objects of human adoration. Whether it be that the mighty dragon who 'deceived the mother of mankind' has, by his wicked arts, prevailed upon men to establish the worship of the serpent, as a monument of his great power and a memorial of their inglorious fall; or that the shape and voluminous coilings of the hateful reptile, suggested the ideas of eternity and power, as they did to the Egyptians of old; or whether it be that it is reckoned an acknowledged maxim in religion, that what is dreaded should be worshipped, certain it is that most nations of antiquity rendered divine homage to serpents. It is well known that all tropical countries are infested with snakes. Towards the end of the summer season, but especially during the rains, serpents issue out of their holes, and do great mischief to men and animals. In Bengal hundreds of persons die every year of the bite of the snake. Hence on many occasions throughout the year the dreaded *Manasî-Devî*, the queen of snakes, is propitiated by presents, vows, and religious rites. In the month of *Shrabana* the worship of the snake goddess is celebrated with great éclat. An image of the goddess seated on a water-lily, encircled with serpents, or a branch of the snake-tree (a species of *Euphorbia*), or a pot of water, with images of serpents made of clay, forms the object of worship. Men, women and children all offer presents, to avert from themselves the wrath of the terrific deity. The *Mals*, or snake-catchers, signalise themselves on this occasion. Temporary scaffolds of bamboo are set up in the presence of the goddess. Vessels filled with all sorts of snakes are brought in. The *mals*, often reeling with intoxication, mount the scaffolds, take out serpents from the

vessels, and allow them to bite their arms. The whole race of serpentry is defied. From the slender and harmless *Hele* to the huge boa-constrictor and the terrific cobra, all make their appearance, and exert their might to strike dead the playful *mals*. Bite after bite succeeds each other; the arms run with blood; and the *mals* go on with their pranks, amid the deafening plaudits of the spectators. Now and then they fall from the scaffold, and pretend to feel the effects of poison, and cure themselves by their incantations. But all is mere pretence. The serpents displayed on the occasion and challenged to do their worst have passed through a preparatory state; their fangs have been carefully extracted from their jaws. But most of the vulgar spectators easily persuade themselves to believe that the *mals* are the chosen servants of Shiva and the favourites of *Manasa*. Although their supernatural pretensions are ridiculous, yet it must be confessed that the *mals* have made snakes the subject of their peculiar study. They are thoroughly acquainted with their qualities, their dispositions, and their habits. They will run down a snake into its hole, and bring it out thence by main force. Even the terrible cobra is cowed down by the controlling influence of a *mal*. When in the act of bringing out snakes from their subterranean holes, the *mals* are in the habit of muttering charms; superstition alone can clothe their unmeaning words with supernatural potency. But it is not inconsistent with the soundest philosophy to suppose that there may be some plants whose roots are disagreeable to serpents, and from which they instinctively turn away. All snake-catchers of Bengal are provided with a bundle of the roots of some plant, which they carefully carry

along with them when they set out on their serpent-hunting expeditions. When a serpent, disturbed in its hole, comes out furiously hissing with rage, with its body coiled, and its head lifted up, the *mal* has only to present before it the bundle of roots above alluded to, at the sight of which it becomes spiritless as an eel. This we have ourselves witnessed more than once. But to return: the exhibitions of snakes, of which we have been speaking, take place in all parts of Bengal. There is a small village in the district of Hooghly where thousands of people annually assemble together to enjoy the sight. Skilful *mals* are always presented, by the gaping multitude, with clothes and money. In giving an account, however short, of the great festival of the queen of snakes, it would be unpardonable were we to omit noticing a circumstance which occurs a day or two before the public exhibitions. Bengali mothers, anxious for the preservation of their children from the bite of serpents, implore the favour of *Manasa*. On one of the last days of the festival, women may be seen coming out of a village with vessels in their hands containing a composition of rice, milk, and sugar. Proceeding out of the village they take their stations generally near a tank, and offer their homely present to the goddess on behalf of their children. The presentation being done, they help themselves to the rice, milk, and treacle; and after thanking the goddess, of whom, however, no image is set up, they return home with the sure hope of seeing their children preserved during the ensuing season from the bite of venomous snakes. In towns and large villages, where women cannot go out, this ceremony takes place in the house. In spite, however, of the caution and piety of Hindu mothers, their

children are sometimes bitten by snakes. In all such cases the power of *Manasa* is by no means questioned; the blame rests either on the children themselves, who are alleged to have been killed for their irreverence to her, or on the mothers, who are supposed not to have properly propitiated the angry goddess."

In his paper on the Vishnavas of Bengal, a Hindu religious sect that took its rise about three hundred years ago, Mr. Day found greater scope for philosophic reflection. We transcribe a short passage from this article, which still deserves the attention of those who make a study of the origin and growth of religious sects. In speaking of the founder of the sect, he strikingly says: "All great reformers are men of *one idea*. The human mind, owing to the limited range of its capacities, and of that passion or enthusiasm which is necessary to the completion of any undertaking, seems to be utterly unfitted for carrying on at the same time a variety of projects. The reformer of Nadiya was pre-eminently a man of *one idea*. But this unity of idea may be carried to a morbid excess. When the whole mind, with all its powers and energies, is intensely devoted to the contemplation of an object which fills it, it is necessarily abstracted from all other objects. When this absence, or rather intense presence, of mind is carried to a faulty excess, the mind verges towards insanity. Hence the truth of the common saying that 'Genius is allied to madness.' The difference between a genius and a maniac, psychologically considered, is that the former can control the mind and direct it at pleasure, while the latter has lost all power over the succession of his thoughts. That the Nadiya saint, by incessant contemplation, rendered himself imbecile, will appear

in the sequel. In the meantime we may remark that this sort of morbid meditation on Krishna appears to have produced in him that state of mind which is aptly designated by the term enthusiasm. Immediately before commencing the great work of preaching the 'love of Krishna,' as he termed it, he fell into an enthusiastic fit of devotion. The intensity of his feelings sought expression in the movements of his body. He fell on the ground, rolled in the dust, wept, laughed, and danced. During this 'fit of love,' which lasted for hours, he neither ate nor drank. When it was day he would ask what part of the night it was, and when it was night he would ask what part of the day it was, while ever and anon he uttered the words, 'Krishna! Krishna! Hari bal! Hari bal!'"

From Berhampore Mr. Day was transferred to Hooghly College, where he remained until he finally retired from Government service. Here, in the summer of 1872, he planned and brought out the *Bengal Magazine*. As editor of this periodical his name and literary reputation became widely spread among the better educated of all classes. It was published monthly. While its professed object was the discussion of current questions connected with Indian politics and society, it did not exclude from its pages articles bearing on the lighter branches of literature. The greater part of the papers appearing in it were on subjects of ephemeral interest, and possessed no permanent literary value in themselves. The chief exception to this statement were the contributions from the editor's own pen. These principally consisted of a series of papers entitled *Recollections of My School Days*, which were in fact, as the title



implies, an autobiographical account of the earlier portion of his life. He also wrote a short account of the Banker Caste in Bengal, to which he himself by birth belonged. His *Recollections of My School Days*, from the easy, familiar, and confidential style which he adopted, as well as from the side-lights which they throw upon the home life of the people of Bengal, form very pleasant reading, but as they have been freely drawn upon in the first two chapters of this sketch, no further reference shall be made to them here.

His two articles on "The Banker Caste of Bengal" might be fitly incorporated in a history of that unique feature of Hindu society, the caste system. In a few opening sentences he thus set forth the purpose he had in view in composing them: "Nothing would throw a stronger light on the nature and character of Hindu society and on its inner life, than a history of the several castes into which that vast social system is divided. Such tribal histories, if they contained accounts not only of the rise and progress of the various castes and of their subdivisions, but also of their peculiar manners, customs, and religious rites, would form a sort of natural history, or rather geology, of Hindu society, laying bare before us the successive formations and strata of which it is composed. We know not how far such histories are possible. Perhaps materials for such narratives have perished in the wreck of time. It cannot be doubted, however, that though complete histories of Hindu castes and tribes are not possible, a great deal of interesting information may be gathered from the unwritten history and floating traditions of each caste. We purpose in the following pages to present our readers a mono-

graph upon the Suvarna-Vaniks, usually called the Banker Caste of Bengal."

Under Mr. Day's editorship the *Bengal Magazine* continued to be published for a number of years. In its early days it met with no little success, but as time wore on its popularity seemed to decline, and, owing to various causes, the expenses of publication were not covered by the receipts. He carried it on for some time after it had ceased to pay, but it failed to regain its ground, and eventually, through bad debts, he sustained considerable loss by it. The causes of this want of support were probably not difficult to account for. In the first place, political questions could interest only a few in a land where political life could hardly be said to exist, and discussions could be little more than criticisms. And further, the circle of natives who were acquainted with English was small, and that from which contributors could be drawn still smaller, so that much depended on the editor himself; the area being so circumscribed caused the ground to be cropped too frequently to continue to bear even a moderately rich literary harvest. Mr. Day manfully held on until it was clearly seen that the *Magazine* was a losing concern. Then its publication was stopped, and with its demise his editorial labours came finally to an end, for although he had other schemes on hand upon which he was desirous of entering, his friends discouraged him from embarking on any more similar undertakings. Shortly before his retiring from Government service, he talked with them about starting a newspaper for the native Christian community, but they were averse to his doing so, because it was felt among them that the burden of years, now pressing upon him, though he still retained his intellectual

powers unimpaired, precluded all hopes of the scheme being successfully carried out.

Hitherto we have noticed only the more fugitive productions of Mr. Day's pen. It now remains for us to say a few words regarding him as an author who has added to the stores of English literature. As the editor of newspapers and magazines, and as a lecturer on current questions connected with their social life and religion, he became well known to his contemporaries. But something more was required of him, if his name were to survive his own generation. The year before he took in hand the editing of the *Bengal Magazine*, he wrote the story of *Govinda Samanta*, a work which, if it did not place him in the highest rank, assuredly gave him an honourable position among the writers of fiction in the English tongue. Though composed in the year 1871, it was not published until 1874, the peculiar circumstances under which it came to be written being responsible for the delay in issuing it to the public. These circumstances, which he recorded in his preface to the novel, were as follows:—A wealthy and enlightened zemindar of Bengal, Babu Joy Kissen Mookerjia, had offered a prize of £50 for the best novel,<sup>u</sup> written either in Bengali or English, illustrating the "Social and Domestic Life of the Rural Population and Working Classes in Bengal." In response to this invitation, *Govinda Samanta* was composed and sent by Mr. Day to the adjudicators selected to decide upon the merits of the competing essays. Two of the gentlemen so appointed happened, at the time when the essays were sent in, to be absent in England, and their absence postponed any final decision on the merits of the essays contributed, for two years. On their re-

turn, the prize was awarded to the author of *Govinda Samanta*. Thus the tale originated, and it must be acknowledged that seldom in the annals of literature has the liberality of a patron of letters stimulated literary talent to better purpose.

The reception accorded to the tale of *Govinda Samanta* on its first appearance must have been a source of much gratification to Mr. Day. The press in India almost without exception was loud in its praise, while not a few prominent newspapers in England favourably reviewed it, speaking of its author in eulogistic terms. Its merits as an interesting picture of the life of the Bengal peasant were freely acknowledged on every hand. In India it was pronounced a truthful portraiture of the manners, customs, and habits of the people it purported to describe. In England, where the author's name was less known than in Bengal, the critics had more to say of his surprising mastery of a language which was not his mother-tongue, and in commendation of the simplicity of his style, which was in striking contrast with the high-flown phraseology affected by most of his countrymen at the time the book was written. It was indeed pertinently observed that if he had done nothing else, he would have "rendered a service to the cultivated class among his own countrymen by his indirect rebuke of their literary vices and his practical demonstration that there is nothing to prevent a Bengali, who has received an English education, from writing like an Englishman." These were the words of a competent judge, and were one of the many testimonies to Mr. Day's scholarship and sound judgment, which enabled him to steer clear of the vices alluded to. His example may have had some

effect in the direction indicated, but in writing *Govinda Samanta* his intention was not to serve as a model in composition to the cultivated few, but to furnish, especially for Europeans, information regarding much in the life of the Bengal ryôt of which they had hitherto remained ignorant; and he sought to make the book as attractive and readable as the subject would allow by telling a "plain unvarnished tale." To most Anglo-Indians even, the home life of the toiling millions around them was almost a sealed book, a fact which was well put by one of the daily newspapers in Calcutta. Commenting on *Govinda Samanta*, the writer said: "It is an admirable book, and is doubly valuable as a source of information, because it is the work of a Bengali gentleman, who must have far better opportunities of knowing his own country people than are open to even the most experienced European. Europeans in India often ask themselves a question to which they are seldom able to give an answer, 'What do all these crowds of men who throng the streets think about?' Possibly the difficulty we find in answering this question argues a want of imagination in us, but more probably it shows merely that we do not know the details of subjects which 'take the place of 'home' discussions on crops, wages, weather, and local grievances. The author of *Govinda Samanta* has put it out of our power to read his book, and remain ignorant of the interests of one considerable class of his countrymen." Nor is the information of the dry statistical or didactic sort; a warmth of tone permeates every page, and not a little of the attractiveness of the book springs from the glow of kindly sympathy that everywhere infuses itself into the narrative. Written with earnest feelings, it bears

the stamp of truth and sincerity, which carries conviction to the reader. Take, for example, his description of a marriage procession, a scene familiar to everyone who has resided in Bengal. Its noisy music as it moves along, with its gaudy show of tinsel trappings, cannot but arrest the attention of the spectator; yet how seldom does the European pause to reflect on the feelings of the chief actors in the scene. After giving an account of the bridegroom's party and its day's march of twenty miles, until it arrives at the outskirts of the girl-bride's village, Mr. Day thus describes its further progress:—

“The shades of evening had descended all over the plain, when the bridegroom's party resumed their festal procession. Madhava (the bridegroom) sat in the *chaturdola*, the torches were lit, the musicians began to play, and the jackals of the neighbouring thickets, frightened by so unusual a noise and so bright a light at such a time, set up an unearthly yell as an accompaniment to the marital music. The party assembled at Badan's (the house of the bride's father), all on tiptoe of expectation, heard with delight the sound of the nuptial music. Badan's heart, and especially Alanga's (the bride's grandmother) leaped with joy. As the sound of the music became louder, the pulse of Badan and Alanga beat faster and faster. As for Malati (the bride) she had scarcely any feelings, one way or the other, as she understood little of the matter; on the whole, I think she was sadder than usual, as she knew that she would have to leave a beloved father, a dear mother, and a still dearer grandmother, and go to a strange place with a man whom she had never seen. As the procession was approaching the village, men, women, and children

ran out into the street exclaiming, 'The bridegroom is coming! the bridegroom is coming!'" The eager expectancy of the older members of the bride's family, contrasted with her own apathy and even sadness, at once lifts the scene from the level of a mere vulgar show, which is probably all the average European spectator thinks of when witnessing a native marriage procession in Bengal.

By way of contrast to this scene of outward joy, let us glance at his picture of woe, where he draws aside the curtain usually concealing Hindu domestic life, in order to show the girl-widow's desolation and the true reason for the wretchedness of her lot:—

"Her married life was now at an end. Though young, she must remain a widow all her life. Association with a husband is regarded as the *summum bonum* of womanly existence. Is life worth living now that happiness has become impossible? What made her saddest was the horrible prospect of perpetual widowhood. Her sun had gone down, while it was noon. Hope that comes to all never visited her. The rest of her life—if life it could be called—was to be one continued midnight, without the remotest prospect of a dawn. It is impossible not to sympathise with a Hindu widow. It is not that she is persecuted and tormented by her relations and friends,—that is a fiction of foreign writers, of people unacquainted with Hindu life in its actual manifestation,—but the peculiar wretchedness of her condition lies in this, that the fountain of her heart, with its affections and desires, is for ever dried up. She becomes a soulless thing, and her life a blank. Aduri did not fill the house and neighbourhood with her cries, nor did she expatiate on every good quality

of her amiable husband. Such a thing would have been deemed indecent in a widow. Her grief was a silent grief. She sobbed day and night. She broke her ornaments, whether of conch-shell, or sealing-wax, or silver; she broke the iron ring on her waist, the symbol of wifhood; she no longer braided her hair; she gave up daubing the top of her forehead with vermilion, which distinguishes a Hindu wife from a Hindu widow; she gave up putting on *satis* with coloured borders. Her share in the pleasures of life had been exhausted; her part on the theatre of life had been played out; henceforth, though in the world, she was not to be of the world. English people have, somehow or other, got the idea that a Hindu widow receives harsh and cruel treatment from the relatives of her husband. This is not true. There are no doubt exceptional cases, but, as a general rule, Hindu widows are not only not ill-treated, but they meet with a vast deal of sympathy. Old widows in a Bengali Hindu family are often the guides and counsellors of those who style themselves the lords of creation." Her being allowed only one meal a day, he affirmed, was no proof of cruelty, as many healthy vigorous men were accustomed to take no more. The unhappy lot of the young Hindu widow condemned to perpetual widowhood has often engaged the attention of enlightened and philanthropic natives of India as well as Europeans, but seldom has her case been better put than in Mr. Day's simple narrative.

We have given this passage at some length because it in a manner epitomises himself as a writer when seeking to promote reforms. Drawn by his kindly nature to the innocent victims of misfortune, he was



ever ready to plead their cause. At the same time he did not permit his sympathy to obscure his judgment. He had a shrewd eye for detecting the real causes of evils, which he was content to depict very much as they really occurred in daily life without exaggerating them by drawing on his imagination, and he bore with impatience arguments advanced on false grounds, especially if these tended to cast unjust reflections on his countrymen. From experience and observation he well knew that the charge of harshness and cruelty towards the widow was not true, and that such a charge levelled against them would, by exciting their hostile opposition, rather retard than hasten an amelioration of her condition. Her position was pitiable, but not from any innate desire as a rule on the part of her relatives to treat her cruelly; for her misery, religion and the tyranny of custom to which the people were fettered were responsible, just as they were for the immolation of widows and the horrors of the pilgrimages to noted shrines which he so graphically described. His conversion to Christianity and his active service as a missionary had made him keenly alive to the defects of Hinduism as a system of religion. To the degrading bondage it imposed upon, and the paralysing effect of the fatalism prevalent among its votaries, the pages of *Gorinda Samanta* bear ample testimony. Nevertheless the book was not an exposure of Hinduism; nor does it so strike the reader. It was first and foremost a plain tale of peasant life, and, sincere Christian that he was, he had too tolerant and catholic a mind not to recognise that the Hindu religion, in some instances at least, had a humanising effect, and helped to 'sweeten existence.

The cheerful scene at the ingathering of the sugar-cane, a scene in which he must have often mingled in childhood's days, might have been penned by one who was still a Hindu. It is a pleasant little sketch, where nobody is any the worse for the peasants' belief in Mother Lakshmi.

"The paddy harvest-field is, as we have seen, a scene of rural joy, but the sugar-cane house is a scene of still greater joy. It is visited every day by every little boy and girl in the village, each of whom receives one sweet cane as a present from the kind-hearted peasants. Every day loads of sugar-cane are given away to children and Brahmins; but the peasants give them away with cheerful hearts, believing that Mother Lakshmi will bless them the coming year with a more abundant crop; and the name of the niggardly and impious husbandmen who sends away children and Brahmins empty-handed from the sugar-cane house, is held in execration by the whole of the village community. Not only is the cane given away, but quantities of the juice while boiling are dealt out to children, who come provided with vessels for the purpose; and not unfrequently brinjals (egg-fruit) and other vegetables are thrown into the boilers, and then taken out and eaten with infinite relish by the children, multitudes of whom are seen, at all hours of the day, loitering about in the precincts of the sugar-cane house, to the great detriment of the village school, which during those days has a thin attendance."

Side by side with this pleasant picture may be put his tragic breaking up of a contented household, in which, as in everything pertaining to the ryot's life, religion plays its part, helping in this instance rather

to deepen than to lighten the shadow of the cloud of affliction that had fallen upon it. The hardships and exposure she had to undergo in her distant pilgrimage to the shrine of Juggernaut, had untimely shortened the days of the grandmother, Alanga, whose wise counsels had long guided the family; while, under the cloak of religion, her son's widow had taken to a life of moral degradation. "Next to Badan, Alanga had the largest share of the care and anxiety in the management of the family; indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that Badan did nothing without consulting his mother, who was endued with no little amount of common sense. Sundari, though the wife of the master of the house, had never been its mistress. That post was always filled by Alanga, without, however, the slightest jealousy on Sundari's part; indeed Sundari often expressed her thankfulness for the privilege of being under the guidance of so wise and so affectionate a mother-in-law.

"But now all this underwent a change. There has been no change in the homestead. There is the same big hut, with its two compartments, one serving as a dormitory, and the other as a refectory, or rather store-room; there is the hut, in the veranda of which is the homely pedal; there is the third hut, which now serves the double purpose of a kitchen and a sleeping-room for Kalamani; and there also stands the cowhouse as before. It is unnecessary to remark that death has made havoc in the family. Gayaram had been bitten to death by a serpent; Badan had been carried off by a fever; and Alanga had died in the 'holy field' of Orissa. Malati was in her husband's house at Darganagar, and Aduri, having become a mendicant, was wandering about the

country in the company of her pious lover, Prem Bhakti. There remained now our hero, his mother, and his uncle Kalamanik, who was still living in single blessedness."

The above extracts from *Govinda Samanta* are by no means the best specimens of the lively incisive manner in which the story is told. For these the reader must go to the book itself. Perhaps the most striking passages are those where Mr. Day, with nervous energy, assailed some abuse, such as his exposure of the harsh, overbearing, unjust dealings of the indigo-planter. Happily these evils have become modified, or even become a matter of past history. The peasant has been placed on a better footing to protect himself, and need not be bullied by either zemindar or indigo-planter into acts ruinous to himself simply for their pecuniary advantage. For his improved condition the peasant owes something to this tale of peasant life. From its warmly espousing the cause of the children of the soil, *Govinda Samanta* has been likened to the story of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and to some slight extent the comparison may hold true. But in many respects the two tales are quite dissimilar, for the tale of Bengal life has none of the thrilling adventures which make the American story exciting reading by its strong appeal to the imagination, and though the ryot was at times oppressed, his legal position was far removed from slavery. Nor was *Govinda Samanta* written for the express object of stirring up sympathy for a down-trodden race. At the same time, the rural inhabitants of Bengal are not a high-spirited people, ready to assert their rights. They have a weakness for running into debt, and their chronic poverty places them at the mercy of a

few wealthier individuals, who often show but little consideration for them. As they pass before us in the pages of Mr. Day's tale, the rustic sons of toil are a simple, inoffensive, and not unlovable folk, who require the protecting arm of the law to prevent their lot being made harder than it need be. Their sincere friend himself, he sought to interest others in their welfare, and we can hardly imagine anything better calculated to do so than his succession of graphic pictures illustrating their home life.

Incidentally this story led him to collect and to translate into English a number of tales exemplifying the folk-lore current among the people of Bengal. How this happened he explained in the preface to the volume of *Folk-Tales* which he published. He there says: "In my *Peasant Life of Bengal* I make the peasant boy Govinda spend some hours every evening in listening to the stories told by an old woman, who was called Sambhu's mother, and who was the best story-teller in the village. On reading that passage, Captain Temple wrote to me to say how interesting it would be to get a collection of the unwritten stories which old women recite to children in the evenings, and to ask whether I could not make a collection." The Sambhu's mother referred to in the story was not an imaginary, but a real person, who bore that name, and from whose lips Mr. Day, when a boy, had listened to hundreds of weird tales. Most of these he had completely forgotten, while the few that he did remember had become confused with each other in his memory, and as she had been dead long before Captain Temple made his suggestion, he had to cast about for other story-tellers. After a great deal of search, a few individuals were at length

found from whom he succeeded in gathering together a number of tales, out of which he selected twenty-two as being sufficiently original and typical to be worth relating.

In compiling his selection of folk-tales, the consideration that mainly guided him in his choice of any particular one was, as he told his readers, its value to comparative mythology; by this test it was accepted or rejected. If he had reason to believe that a tale had passed down from mouth to mouth through many generations without being substantially altered, then he deemed it worthy of being preserved, and of having a place in his volume; but if it bore marks of modern additions, he put it aside. • We might hence suppose that the collection would be of interest only to comparative mythologists. This is not the case, for it is one that most young people will read with pleasure, and even older readers, who are not usually attracted by this kind of literature, will find in it the means of spending an agreeable half-hour. This is partly owing to the manner in which the stories are told. The easy flow of simple expressive language, so thoroughly in keeping with the character of the stories themselves, makes them readily understood and appreciated by the meanest intelligence. In their pithy, idiomatic English they scarcely read like a translation. The narrative is never wearisome, because the sentences are short and clear and never involved, while the incidents crowd each other in quick succession, and do not allow it to drag. At the same time, every story, notwithstanding certain traces of a familiarity with English literature that occasionally obtrude themselves, has a distinctly Oriental flavour about it, owing to the pro-

minent part that Brahmins, caste, snakes, jungles, pearls, and precious stones play. The stories are so admirably told that one regrets that Mr. Day did not do more in this way. From one of his tales we give the portion containing the legendary account of the origin of the use and abuse of opium.

"Postomani lived in the Rishi's hut, and spent her time in tending the flowers and watering the plants. One day, as she was sitting at the door of the hut during the Rishi's absence, she saw a man dressed in a very rich garb come towards the cottage. She stood up and asked the stranger who he was, and what he had come there for. The stranger answered that he had come a-hunting in those parts, and that he had been chasing in vain a deer, that he felt thirsty, and that he had come to the hut of the hermit for refreshment.

"*Postomani*.—'Stranger, look upon this cot as your own house. I'll do everything I can to make you comfortable; I am only sorry we are too poor, suitably to entertain a man of your rank, for, if I mistake not, you are the king of this country.'

"The king smiled. Postomani then brought out a water-jug, and made as if she would wash the feet of her royal guest with her own hands, when the king said, 'Holy maid, do not wash my feet, for I am only a Kshatrya, and you are the daughter of a holy sage.'

"*Postomani*.—'Noble sir, I am not the daughter of the Rishi, neither am I a Brahmani girl; so there can be no harm in my touching your feet. Besides, you are my guest, and I am bound to wash your feet.'

"*King*.—'Forgive my impertinence. What caste do you belong to?'

"*Postomani*.—'I have heard from the sage that my parents are Kshatryas.'

"*King*.—' May I ask you whether your father was a king, for your uncommon beauty and your stately demeanour show that you are a born princess? '

" Postomani, without answering the question, went inside the hut, brought out a tray of the most delicious fruits, and set it before the king. The king, however, would not touch the fruits till the maid had answered his questions. When pressed hard, Postomani gave the following answer:—' The holy sage says that my father was a king. Having been overcome in battle, he, along with my mother, fled into the woods. My poor father was eaten up by a tiger, and my mother at that time was brought to bed with me, and she closed her eyes as I opened mine. Strange to say, there was a beehive on the tree at the foot of which I lay; the drops of honey fell into my mouth, and kept alive the spark of life till the kind Rishi found me and brought me into this hut. This is the simple story of the wretched girl that now stands before the king.'

"*King*.—' Call not yourself wretched. You are the loveliest and most beautiful of women. You would adorn the palace of the mightiest sovereign.'

" The upshot was that the king made love to the girl, and they were joined in marriage by the Rishi. Postomani was treated as the favourite queen, and the former queen was in disgrace. Postomani's happiness, however, was shortlived. One day, when she was standing by a well, she became suddenly giddy, fell into the water, and died. The Rishi then appeared before the king, and said: ' O king, grieve not over the past. What is fixed by fate must come to pass. The queen, who has just been drowned, was not of royal blood. She was born a rat; I then



changed her successively, according to her own wish, into a cat, a dog, an ape, a boar, an elephant, and a beautiful girl. Now that she is gone, do you again take into your favour your former queen. As for my reputed daughter, through the favour of the gods, I will make her name immortal. Let her body remain in the well; fill the well up with earth. Out of her flesh and bones will grow a tree, which shall be called after her, Posto—that is, the Poppy tree. From this tree will be obtained a drug called opium, which will be celebrated as a powerful medicine through all ages, and which will always be either swallowed or smoked as a wonderful narcotic till the end of time. The opium swallower or smoker will have one quality of each of the animals into which Postomani was transformed. He will be mischievous like a rat, fond of milk like a cat, quarrelsome like a dog, filthy like an ape, savage like a boar, and high-tempered like a queen.’”

The period of Mr. Day's greatest literary activity was during the early seventies, when, in addition to preparing his college lectures on English Literature and on Philosophy (moral and mental), and writing books, he also edited the *Bengal Magazine*, and for a time supplied the critical notices of books for the *Calcutta Review*. He continued, however, busy with his pen to a much later date, for both before and after his retiring from Government service, he regularly contributed articles on social, moral, and political topics to the *Hindu Patriot*.

Few of Mr. Day's contributions to the *Bengal Magazine* were published separately, but one of them, giving an outline of the *Life and Labours of the Rev. Dr. J. Wilson of Bombay*, was reproduced in booklet

form. It had first been delivered in the Free Church, Calcutta, and thereafter, in a modified shape, before a meeting of the Bethune Society. Being inserted in the *Bengal Magazine*, it reached Edinburgh, where it fell into the hands of Dr. Duff, who was so highly pleased with it that he had it reprinted, with a short preface from his own pen, and presented a copy to each member of the Free Church General Assembly of 1876. For years Mr. Day was a member of the Bethune Society, and almost annually delivered a lecture before its members, generally choosing some descriptive subject to discourse upon, such as the "Parsees of Bombay," and the like.

Upon Dr. Duff's death, Mr. Day paid a tribute to his old teacher and friend, with whom so much in his life was associated, by composing a memoir, which he published under the title of *Recollections of Dr. Duff*. As the title implies, it did not profess to be a biography of the doctor throughout his stirring life, but in the main confined itself to an account of his work in India, which had directly come under the writer's own observation. He, of course, could hardly avoid traversing again much of the same ground as he had already gone over in his *Recollections of My School Days*, and indeed no inconsiderable portion of the memoir is made up of passages transcribed from the pages of the *Bengal Magazine*. Still the sketch sheds a light of its own upon Dr. Duff, and is quite distinct from either of the biographies written by Dr. T. Smith or Dr. G. Smith. In speaking of Dr. Duff's work, it naturally comes to him to say something of the colleagues by whom he was so ably supported, and not the least pleasant part of the memoir are those chapters in which Mr. Day eulogises the ster-

ling worth and loyal devotion to duty of the other missionary professors of the Free Church Institution, who, while yet in the prime of life, had been called to their reward. Although Mr. Day thought and wrote a good deal on religious subjects, he published but comparatively little in this direction. His lectures on the *Brahma Samaj* and his *Searchings of Heart* have been already referred to. Two other pamphlets may be mentioned, both published under the auspices of the Religious Tract Society. One was on Vedantism, of which a new edition after his death was printed; the other formed one of a series of twelve essays on the Bible, written by different persons, but published in one volume in 1885. Its subject was "The Influence of the Bible on Nations."

The incidents that occur in the ordinary routine of professorial duties rarely possess much interest for anyone outside the walls of the professor's own classroom. Nor can it be said that Mr. Day's life, in this respect, greatly differed from others in his profession, for it presents little calling for special remark. After serving under Government for twenty-one years, he retired from the Educational Service in 1889. By the rules of the service he should have retired when he reached the age of fifty-five, but he was twice granted an extension of service after passing the age of compulsory retiral, first for two and again for five years. At first his promotion was slow, and nearly nine years elapsed before he got into the graded list of the Educational Department. To Sir Richard Temple, when Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, he owed his first step upward. In a letter to Mr. Day, Sir Richard explained to him that his promotion was entirely due to his rare literary abilities, which had

become prominent by the appearance of his book *Govinda Samanta*.

Not long after his being placed on the retired list, Mr. Day's health rapidly gave way from various causes. The peculiar conduct of his eldest son, whom he had at considerable expense sent to England to study law, proved a grievous disappointment to him, and as he had always been an exceedingly affectionate father to his children, it told seriously upon his health. His journalistic and literary undertakings also led him to spend money for which he got no adequate return, and this, in his failing health, so far added to his anxiety as to thoroughly impair his nervous system. His eyesight failed him, and for some years before he died he was practically blind. This loss of sight he felt keenly, though his wife and daughters helped to solace him by reading to him whatever he desired. After this calamity befell him he used to insist on his family going to Church on Sunday evenings and on his being left all alone. Mrs. Day asked him how he spent his time when thus alone, and his reply was: "Those moments are mostly spent in inward prayers for you, the children, and myself, and in meditations." On the 28th October 1894 he passed away, dying as he had lived, firm in his faith in Jesus Christ. He left behind him his wife, three sons, and two daughters to mourn his loss. Whether the eldest son was at that time alive or not, they could not tell, as all trace of him had been lost to his parents for years.

That his literary productions were highly appreciated by those best qualified to form an opinion of them, and commended themselves to men of widely different tastes and culture, Mr. Day had ample reason to believe. They had been extensively and

favourably reviewed by newspapers and periodicals; from numerous quarters letters reached him, expressing the pleasure the senders had derived from the perusal of his writings. Within the limits of a short memoir, space cannot be found for complimentary letters, but we may make an exception of a brief note which, as being written by one whose name in the domain of science was universally known, must have been peculiarly gratifying to him. This note was not sent directly to Mr. Day, but came into his hands through his publishers, and ran as follows:—

“I see that the Rev. Lal Behari Day is editor of the *Bengal Magazine*, and I shall be glad if you would tell him, with my compliments, how much pleasure and instruction I derived from reading, a few years ago, his novel *Govinda Samanta*.

“CHARLES DARWIN.

“13th April 1881,

“DOWN, BECKENHAM, KENT.”

Though Mr. Day, by reason of his blindness and the increasing infirmities of age, had, for some years before his death, ceased to take any active share in discussing public affairs, the news of that event was heard with sorrow by a wide circle of friends, and brought both from Europeans and his fellow-countrymen numerous letters of sympathy and condolence to his mourning widow and family. Missionaries of nearly every denomination of Christians paid their tribute of respect to the memory of one who, by his learning and piety, as well as by the purity and integrity of his life, had faithfully endeavoured to uphold the beauty and dignity of the truly Christian character. By his students, who had listened to his

lectures and benefited by his instruction and counsel, he was lovingly remembered, and few of them omitted to testify their sincere respect for his name. On a day near the close of October 1894, his mortal remains were borne to the quiet Scotch cemetery on the outskirts of Calcutta, and there laid in their last resting-place.

In the course of our short narrative we have barely touched upon Mr. Day's private life within his cheerful, affectionate family circle. Like many other family circles it, in his later years, was not without its chair around which sorrowful memories clung. The following letter from Mrs. Day to a friend in Scotland, describing her husband's last illness when intimating his death, will not be unacceptable as affording a glimpse of the venerable Christian's home-life in his declining years. In his blindness we can fancy that he must often have thought of the similarly afflicted great English poet with whose works and life he was so familiar.

"CALCUTTA, 12th January 1895.

"DEAR DR. HASTIE,—It is with feelings of intense grief that I write to you this letter.

"On the 28th October 1894 my dear husband, the Rev. Lal Behari Day, breathed his last, after a lingering illness of seven weeks. He died of hemiplegia, or paralysis of half the body, attended by a coma. But during the whole of last year Mr. Day suffered more or less from extreme nervousness, and gradually became more and more frail.

"About a month before he took ill of his last illness, and when he seemed to be unusually better both in mind and body than he had been for months previous, I asked Mr. Day what his feelings were

on the subject of death: how he regarded his self-imposed solitude and seclusion, and how he passed the hours when he insisted on being left alone in consequence of my having to accompany my daughters to Church on Sunday evenings, which was the only time all three of us together ever left him alone. He said: 'Those moments are mostly spent in inward prayers for you, the children, and myself, and in meditations.' He then went on further to say that he preferred being left alone by himself, with merely the servants to look after him, to having any friend or outsider near him—that, as long as he lived, he wished to be attended by none but his wife and children, and that he had no fear of death. 'None whatever: I have committed myself to the Lord, and am willing to depart or remain whenever and as long as He sees fit.'

"Mr. Day once said to his daughters during his last illness, 'See, we must all meet there,'—pointing heavenwards. He felt his blindness keenly, and on one occasion during this sickness he said, 'I shall not be blind in heaven.' For some time in the early stage of the same illness his mind seemed to give way, and his overworked brain got out of order. But before his decease he seemed to be quite sensible again.

"Being a most affectionate father, he always used to express a desire to the effect that he hoped till his death to have all his three sons and two daughters near him, and he broke down completely owing to our eldest son having disappointed us. We spent over Rs.12,000 to qualify him for the bar, and the boy left home with a solemn promise that in the event of his being permitted to return from England (after passing his exams. and keeping his terms) a

full-fledged barrister, he would help us in his turn to educate and settle in life his junior brothers and sisters. If all that we heard was true, the Jesuits got hold of our poor infatuated son. Subsequently we heard that he was probably made to join a secret order of Jesuit priests, in doing which all earthly ties are renounced, ignored, and unheeded. Since then we made many attempts to get correct and authenticated information of him, but up to this date we have failed to solve the mystery.

"My dear husband broke down rapidly under this, and other disappointments of a pecuniary nature (during the past five years) owing to his journalistic and literary undertakings and tendencies. His eyes, together with his whole nervous system, became thoroughly impaired and shaken.

"A few hours before Mr. Day passed away, he seemed conscious of what was said to him, and though his eyes were shut, and his tongue and throat were becoming paralysed, he was able to answer quite sensibly in negative or affirmative monosyllables when texts of Scripture were sounded in his ears, and when we asked him whether he felt comforted by the verse, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' which my youngest daughter repeated to him. Throughout his whole illness, my husband's mind and thoughts were quite abstracted from the present world, and always hovered on things spiritual and the future state. During the last two years of his life, Mr. Day used to get us to read to him works on the Life, Death, and Resurrection of our blessed Saviour, besides the sermons 'Holy Living,' 'Holy Dying,' etc., of Jeremy Taylor.



“My dear husband now lies in the family vault in the Scotch Church burying-ground, with the dust of our dear infants, two girls and a boy, all of whom died many years ago. On the stone bearing the inscription of the dates of all their births and deaths and names, is inscribed the following text: ‘Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven’; and below his name we have got the verses engraved, ‘Thine eyes shall behold the King in His beauty. For ever with the Lord.’

“With the united kind regards of us all as a family to yourself, believe me.—Yours sincerely,

“B. DAY.”

A passing reference may be made to the fact that on his taking up residence in Calcutta when he retired from Government service, he again became a worshipper in St. Andrew’s Church, hallowed as it was to him through its memories of his earliest Christian impressions. That he should close his Christian pilgrimage as he had begun it, in communion with the Established Church of Scotland, does not imply that late in life his views regarding the Free Church of Scotland as a Church had undergone any change, or that it was less dear to him. We said, on a former page, that it was questionable whether the line of demarcation separating the sister Presbyterian Churches had ever been to his eyes very strongly marked, and, as time wore on, it seems to have grown fainter and fainter. Many years before, in his lecture on the “Practicability of Organising a National Church in Bengal,” he had suggested, as a basis of agreement, that Native Christians should repudiate all denominational distinctions, while at the

same time he indicated that, if one or two tenets peculiar to the Roman Catholic Church were dropped, he was prepared to go so far himself, and become a member of the Church founded on this broad basis. Considerations of a more or less purely personal nature led to his attending St. Andrew's Church, while he still maintained kindly relations with his old friends in the Free Church. On his death, the Rev. Principal of the Free Church Institution preached his funeral sermon to his old congregation in Cornwallis Square, giving an excellent and appreciative summary of the work of his life, while the Rev. Principal of the General Assembly's Institution encouraged a movement to erect some memorial to his name in that Institution. This has recently been done in the form of a tablet placed on its walls, and bearing the following inscription:—

IN MEMORY OF  
THE REV. LAL BEHARI DAY,

A student of the General Assembly's Institution under Dr. Duff, 1834 to 1844; Missionary and Minister of the Free Church of Scotland, 1855 to 1867; Professor of English Literature in the Government Colleges at Ben-  
hampore and Hooghly, 1867 to 1889; Fellow of the University of Calcutta from 1877; and well known as a journalist, and as author of "Bengal Peasant Life,"  
and other works.

Born at Talpur, Burdwan, 18th December 1824; died  
at Calcutta, 28th October 1894.

Some of his surviving pupils and of his numerous admirers have erected this tablet.

There are few who will not agree that this tribute to his memory as on the part of his old pupils is exceedingly appropriate, seeing that by his example he showed the youth of India what they might do by

steadfast perseverance, and that, in a measure, he led the way, it may be fairly said, to her young men of the present generation taking the highest honours at the English universities. To them the testimony of his whole life ought to be an incentive to noble endeavour. Appropriate, too, is the respect shown by those two missionary institutions to the name of him of whom it was well and truly said that the missionary value of his books is none the less great that it is purely indirect. Taken all in all, he was more a tiller of the soil than a reaper of the harvest, but he was, all the same, a missionary in the broadest and fullest, and possibly the richest sense of the term.

Thus far we have sought to weave into a more or less connected story a few of the more prominent facts in the life of one who must be considered a man of mark among the thinkers and reformers of India in his day. Certainly any history of its missions or literature would be incomplete without some reference to his work. Whether this short memoir may interest the general reader it is not for us to express an opinion, but we do not hesitate to say that the subject of it was one whose life and work entitled him to something more than a passing obituary notice. The life of the man who, either by the force of genius or by his energy and industry, comes to the front among his contemporaries as a leader and teacher, contains some facts worthy of being remembered; such a one possesses a history worth relating. If he has won for himself a name in spite of being handicapped at the outset by adverse circumstances, if he had, in raising himself to a position of distinction, to struggle with difficulties and surmount obstacles that would have turned aside a less resolute nature from

attempting to climb the steep ascent to fame, then his life is not without its lesson. In such elements the life of the Rev. Lal Behari Day is by no means wanting.

Few names were more widely known in Bengal or so universally held in respect as his. Unaided by any accident of birth or wealth, he earned for himself a high standing among all classes, being held in honourable esteem alike by Europeans and Natives of India. But for his own efforts and firm tenacity of purpose, he might, like multitudes of others born under similar conditions, have passed his days in obscurity without ever being heard of beyond the narrow precincts of his native village. His belonging to a strict Hindu family, the poverty of his parents, the primitive state of education in the remote sleepy hamlet where they had their home, presented but an unpromising soil for the growth and development of those talents which he afterwards conspicuously displayed. On reaching the age of manhood he had, as we have seen, the moral courage to break through the network of Hinduism which enveloped the religious, social, and family life of his earlier days, and to adopt Christianity as his creed—a step deliberately taken, but which involved no little sacrifice on the part of the convert of those times. Thence onward, throughout his comparatively long life, the dominant idea pervading his thoughts was how to improve and elevate the moral tone of the people of his country, and instil into their minds a nobler conception of religion.

It goes without saying that the bare fact of his turning from Hinduism to Christianity, and leading an exemplary life such as his new faith demanded,

though it might have made his worth appreciated by a limited circle of some few of his more intimate friends, would not have sufficed to make his influence felt over the wider sphere to which it extended, nor would his name have become almost a household word among the better educated of his countrymen. It may further be said that only in a minor degree can the hold which he had upon their minds be referred directly to his missionary labours, his pastoral work, or even to his teaching from the professorial chair. No doubt, while on his mission tours, undertaken during the first years after his conversion, he became a well-known figure to many of the inhabitants of the villages which he visited, nor would those whom he induced to enter into discussions with him on questions of religion be likely to forget him soon. But as a missionary, minister, or professor, he could at most address his thoughts to but a very small section of the community, while his choice of topics was circumscribed by the nature of his office. His literary tastes and abilities encouraged him at an early stage to give his attention to a means of appealing to a larger audience. He was quick to perceive that, with the spread of education, the press was daily growing to be a more powerful agent in guiding men's opinions. The bent of his own mind strongly inclined to literature, though he could with ease master any subject in any department of knowledge. English literature, which he passionately admired, he studied with a zeal surpassed by few; blocked though his way was by serious obstructions, nothing could damp or repress his ardour in its pursuit, and while still a young man he had made himself thoroughly acquainted with the works of the

best English writers. In one respect fortune favoured him. When he entered the Missionary College, he had the inestimable advantage of having his studies directed by a body of learned men to whose lectures few young students could listen without having kindled within them an enthusiastic love of learning. Never was anyone more willing and ready to acknowledge his indebtedness to his teachers than Mr. Day, who, on more than one occasion, with his pen expressed his lively sense of the obligations he lay under to them. Still, it must be admitted that to his own indomitable perseverance was due the credit of his acquiring that knowledge and mastery of the English tongue which enabled him to write with a simplicity and felicity closely approaching its classic prose compositions. It should not be forgotten that English was to him much more a foreign tongue than it is to the youth of the capital of India at the present day, when one hears on every hand the educated portion of its population speaking that language with a fluency, ease, and correctness that leaves little or nothing to be desired. The more we consider the circumstances of his early life, the more we feel drawn towards the author of *Govinda Samanta*, who won for himself an honourable place in the roll of names that adorn the annals of English literature. The care with which he cultivated his literary powers was characteristic of the man. He did nothing by halves; what he did, he did thoroughly. In solid, sound learning, in lofty morality, and in earnest piety, he presented the finest type of character moulded in the class-room of a Christian mission.

It will not be out of place here to say a few words regarding the General Assembly's Institution with

which the most important events of his life were closely connected. Its history is well known, and we shall only recapitulate one or two points bearing on our subject. In the beginning of the present century there had arisen in Scotland a movement which had for its object the planting of Christian missions in non-Christian countries. Gradually this movement gathered strength, until at length the Church of Scotland, roused to a sense of its responsibility, and recognising its duty to spread abroad the message of the Gospel, sent out Alexander Duff as its first missionary to Bengal. At the time when the young missionary started for India, Lal Behari Day was just old enough to crawl about his father's door, little dreaming that this energetic enthusiastic Scotsman's departure from the land of brown heath and shaggy wood for the sweltering plains of Lower Bengal had any significance for him. On reaching his destination, Dr. Duff, after surveying the ground, determined to open a school in Calcutta, in which a healthy secular education had its place alongside instruction in the Christian religion. What success attended his scheme, how—being ably assisted by other missionary colleagues from Scotland, who laboured with a zeal and a devotion not inferior to Dr. Duff himself—he raised the school into a college, and the reputation of the General Assembly's institution in a few years spread over India, are matters noted here, because they help to explain the powerful impression which the teaching in that institution made upon its pupils and students; it was a period of buoyant hopefulness on the part of teachers and taught alike. When Lal Behari left its walls after a splendid career as a student, it was already nearing the zenith of its fame.

The closer relations with his missionary Professors into which the distinguished position he took in the College naturally brought him, served but to heighten his respect for them, and, though not the first, he was among the earliest of its students to transfer its allegiance to Christianity. His missionary training under these favourable conditions might reasonably be expected to bear good fruit; and so indeed it did. In the history of Indian Missions, other converts will be found to have led lives beautiful for their purity and simplicity, but there are not many on whom the beneficent effects of Christian faith and Western culture engrafted on an acute, receptive, and keenly sensitive Hindu mind, were so prominently and clearly marked as in Lal Behari Day.

His earnest piety and sound judgment made him a valuable servant of the mission, and the worth of his services was fully recognised and appreciated by its leaders, to whom it was a matter of as keen disappointment as it was of regret to himself that circumstances led him to retire from active office in the ministry. Into his missionary duties he threw himself heart and soul, and the idea of looking at the office of the ministry as simply a profession requiring certain special skill and knowledge was repugnant to him. Once, when invited to an interview with Dr. Norman Macleod, who was on a tour of inspection of Indian Missions, he was rather surprised at hearing the genial doctor refer to the minister's calling as a profession.

Of those promising young men who, in the first half of the century, boldly shook off the burden of Hinduism and turned to Christianity as the faith which alone offered them the means of satisfying their longing after, and helping them to a purer,



spiritual life, few were spared to so ripe an age, and, if we except the Rev. K. M. Bannerjea, there was no other who attained the same influential position, or more completely fulfilled the hopes to which his powers, as manifested in his younger years, gave rise, than the Rev. Lal Behari Day. His known abilities, his broad views and sympathies, which made him charitably tolerant towards those who differed in opinion and did not see eye to eye with himself, while he at the same time firmly held to his own opinions, formed after mature deliberation; the candour with which he gave free expression to his thoughts, when he deemed it his duty to do so, and the strict uprightness of his life, gave him a marked personality, and secured for him the esteem and confidence of those even who were but distantly acquainted with him. I well remember one delightful January afternoon, when in company with a friend I visited him at his cheerful home in Hooghly College. As we sat in his verandah, the shadows of the trees lengthened imperceptibly in the adjacent park while the flood of conversation flowed on; nor have I forgotten the bright hearty assent which he gave to everything that met his approval, or his quiet, courteous dignity when compelled to dissent from anything advanced with which he felt he could not quite agree.

His thorough independence of mind was a noteworthy feature of his character. He thought for himself, and adhered to his convictions. This was specially seen in his intercourse with Europeans, towards whom he acted and spoke with a manly freedom. Through his own merits he had risen to an honourable position, and, conscious of his own abilities, he refused to believe that he belonged to a

race inferior to Europeans, who were at times inclined to assume a superiority on very insufficient grounds. His independent and his obvious sincerity of purpose gave weight to his words, and well fitted him for the task he imposed on himself of endeavouring to encourage more of mutual respect between the governing and subject classes. The chasm separating the two had been widened by the fierce struggle of the Mutiny that took place while he was mission superintendent at Culna; and if it has since been greatly narrowed, it is to men like Mr. Day that this happy result is chiefly due. In furtherance of this object, he earnestly and unshrinkingly exerted all his powers, not hesitating to tell unpalatable truths if need be. The welfare of his countrymen he had warmly at heart, and if they were fully to benefit by the presence of Europeans among them, the two could not be drawn too closely together. Consequently they could neither manifest too much mutual respect nor entertain too kindly feelings towards each other. To him, as a thoughtful Christian, the greatest blessing that accrued to India from the British rule was not the material prosperity that followed in the wake of the settled government and order, nor even the gratifying spectacle of its people living contentedly under the just administration of equitable laws. These were indeed considerations that weighed with him, and he did not undervalue their importance. But they were of small moment when compared with the fact that a door stood open through which the thoughts and civilisation of the West, and, above all, Christianity, might stream in and raise to a higher level among the peoples of the earth the inhabitants of the land he loved so well, with its history stretching far back

into the remote past. The real greatness of a nation rests on the character of its people, when grounded and rooted on pure religion. He knew how much he owed to Christianity, and longed for the day when his country should be like debtor with himself, and so be counted among the nations of Christendom. This thought was ever uppermost in his mind, nor, till the shadows of evening closed around him, did he cease to strive in his own way to assist in the upward progress of the millions born to live and die in India, humbly hoping that his Lord and Master might at last say unto him, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

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